

TRIBUTE TO THE TWILIGHT ZONE
TOWER OF TERROR

Mermaids &
Old Florida Charm

ORLANDO Attractions MAGAZINE

AttractionsMagazine.com

Fall 2013

Volume 6, Issue 4

**Transformers
Roll Out
at Universal**

**Orlando's Top 10
Roller Coasters**

**Q&A: From
Music Consultant
to Disney Legend**

**TRANSFORMERS
THE RIDE - 3D**

**Resort Report: Rosen Centre
offers luxury and convenience**

PLUS

**Updates, Rumors,
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ON THE COVER:

Optimus Prime and Bumblebee join General Morshower and N.E.S.T. soldiers, ready to protect the AllSpark during the Transformers ride grand opening at Universal Studios Florida. Read all about it on page 32.

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THESE STORIES AND MORE...

In addition to the stories and photos in this magazine, check our website regularly for even more, plus many videos. Stay up-to-date with all the latest theme park and attraction news through our weekly video shows, download our free iPhone/iPad app and sign up for our free e-mail newsletter.

AMERICAN IDOL FINALISTS VISIT DISNEY

Some of the 2013 American Idol finalists showed up at Disney's Hollywood Studios recently. Check out our online photo gallery of the event and video to see them ride down Hollywood Blvd, greet their fans, answer questions and more.



TOKYO DISNEYSEA VIDEOS

Our friends at Theme Park Review recently visited Tokyo Disneyland and DisneySea and captured video ride-throughs of some of the most popular attractions. Visit our YouTube channel for their versions of the Tower of Terror, Aquatopia, Sindbad's Storybook Voyage and even Pooh's Honey Hunt.

LIVE FROM THE PARKS

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/attractions and our Facebook page at facebook.com/attractionsmagazine. We frequently post on-the-spot information, photos and short videos while we're inside Orlando's theme parks. You can also be notified of our latest videos if you subscribe to our YouTube channel at youtube.com/attractionsmagazine.



D23 EXPO 2013

Disney's third fan convention was held in August in Anaheim, Calif. We were there to bring you all the Disney World news and more. Check online for our photo gallery, blog posts and videos. We've posted more than 20 videos from the event including the Aug. 15 episode of The Show dedicated to it.



FANTASY FAIRE AND MICKEY AND THE MAGICAL MAP

Disneyland Resort recently opened an expansion of Fantasyland as Fantasy Faire. Watch our videos of the Fantasy Faire stage show in the Royal Theatre featuring "Tangled" and "The Beauty and the Beast" and the new Mickey and the Magical Map stage show.



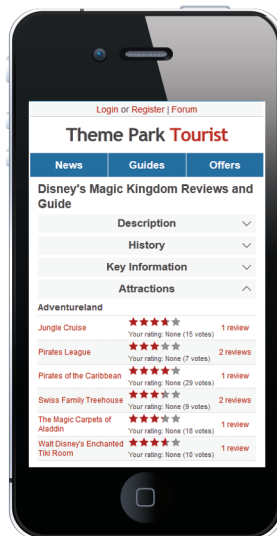


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FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you enjoy this issue, including the new rumors column on page 58, "The Rumor Queue". Rumors are always circulating but we try not to spread them unless there's some basis of fact or the rumor seems likely to happen. But we're going a little beyond that with this new column. We'll still be trying to present the rumors that have some merit, but we'll also mention some that seem to stick around. As it says at the beginning of the column, these rumors are not fact and should be seen only as here say until officially confirmed or denied. We know sometimes rumors become "fact" in some people's minds, and that's not our intent. Enjoy them as pure speculation and dream about what's possible.



Have Fun,
Matt Roseboom
Editor/Publisher

Oliver and the rest of the family. Next week we head to Disney before jetting home to England. Will keep watching (Attractions Show) to relive the memories of this once in a lifetime holiday.

Chris Lorraine Oliver and Alex Scott
Hull, England

I'm glad you've been able to visit Orlando and have some family fun again and hope you'll all be back soon. We wish Oliver a quick recovery and a long life of good health.

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS

I congratulate you and your team on such a brilliant magazine. I always look forward to each edition, packed with so much news about the latest Orlando projects. Your weekly shows are also must viewing, and it's the next best thing to actually living in Orlando. I can't wait for my return trip to the magic on Nov. 29, when I will be celebrating turning 65 - and couldn't imagine a better place to be on this special occasion.

Brian Burton
Borehamwood, GB

I hope you have a happy and fun 65th! Be sure to get your birthday button when you go to the theme parks.

ONLY 102 WEEKS?

I came across your show by accident. I love the show. I have just spent the past number of weeks doing catch up. I didn't realize how much I missed on my last visit to Walt Disney World. I can't wait to return. I only have 102 weeks to go.

Louise Corris,
Cardiff, G.B.

I'm glad you found us and hope the 102 weeks fly by. I'm glad we can help pass the time.

CARS LAND EAST?

I'm a huge fan of your magazine! As an avid Disney fan, I'm always on top of the latest rumors and reports, and recent-

ly, I've been hearing news of the closing of Hollywood Studios attractions towards the back of the park to make room for a Walt Disney World Cars Land. Can you confirm or deny this please?

Christopher Viola
South Jersey, N.J.

As of press time, Cars Land coming to Walt Disney World is just a rumor. Read more about it and other rumors on page 58.



BETTER THAN PLUTO?

This is my dog PT who has an image of Mickey Mouse on his back. When he wags his tail, it looks like Mickey Mouse is wagging his tail.

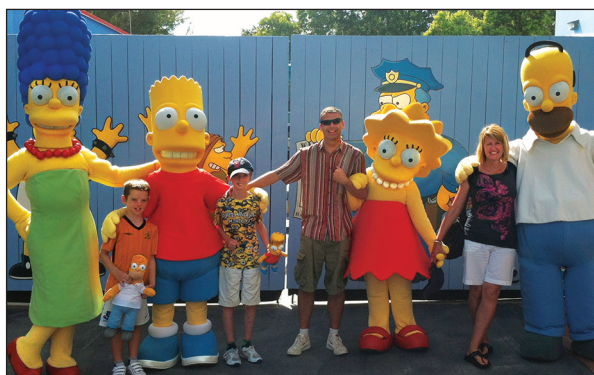
Ron Quimby
South China, Maine

That's really cool. It even looks like a rare side profile Hidden Mickey. Thanks for sending it in.

HELP DISNEYLAND PARIS

You may have heard that Disneyland Paris is in a very bad state, and it became even worst the last months. Countless breakdowns, bad conditions, closed attractions, restaurants, boutiques and no stage show and nighttime parade anymore. This situation is very sad and we want to raise the attention of the Walt Disney Company, which remains endlessly blind on that issue.

For that reason, along with a few other Disneyland Paris locals/regular visitors from various European countries, we launched an open letter to The Walt



FINALLY BACK IN ORLANDO

Well, the Scott family has finally made it to Orlando, 21 years after mum and dad met here on our first visit (1992). You might remember our two boys Oliver and Alex with the Ripleys T-shirt that dad won in your competition last year.

Finally after heart surgery and numerous operations (for our eldest son Oliver), we have been able to make it to Orlando. We thought we would never make it.

Universal did a fantastic personal meet and greet with The Simpsons for

Disney Company, asking them to finally step in. More than 3,000 people have already signed it. I invite you to read it here: change.org/petitions/mr-bob-iger-ceo-the-walt-disney-company-save-disneyland-paris.

We know it probably won't make Bob Iger say, "Hey they're right, let's fix this and spend \$2 billion in Paris." We're just trying to make our voice heard.

Unfortunately it's not easy to reach overseas audiences with this project. However we think every person who cares about the Disney quality standard should care about this situation and help us solve it for good.

Guillaume
Paris, France

I hadn't heard that it was looking bad, but if that's true, I do hope those problems are cleared up soon. Have any of our other readers noticed this?



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYES

This photo was taken at the bounty hunter greeting down by the Pixar concourse on May the 4th. Zam was in character and getting in a lot of girls' faces. But when this little girl came up to her, she crouched right down to give her a good look. Seems innocent here, but the little girl freaked out a second later. She was nervous about what was going to happen.

Peter Johnson
Clermont, Fla.

Don't worry little girl, Zam isn't how she appears. (She's worse ... looking that is.)

BUTTERBEER WHISKERS WITH PIC

I wanted to share a picture I took on my recent trip to Orlando and The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. As I sat enjoying my Butterbeer, I was soon joined by this cheeky squirrel. She did some flirting on the bench next to me, before making a bee line for the Butterbeer! And she eventually came up for air, sporting creamy whiskers, hehe!

Alan Blundell
Merseyside, U.K.



That squirrel has good taste. Yum, Butterbeer!

DISNEY CONNECTION

It's this simple: I love anything Walt Disney World! Even though I live 12 hours away, I still have visited many

times and always count on the next time I can go back. I'm constantly bugging everyone in my family about when we can go again. I'm always looking on the Internet to see what's going on at Disney World.

When I stumbled onto your website, I subscribed to your magazine right away. This magazine is my way of feeling like I'm at Disney World when I can't be there. When I'm having a bad day, the one thing that can always make me feel better and put a smile on my face is having a connection to Disney World and your magazine does that for me. So thank you for giving all of us this connection. I look forward to receiving my first issue.

Beverly Wildman
Trenton, Ga.

I'm so happy we are your Disney connection. Maybe someday you can make the move to Orlando. (But don't stop subscribing.)



Attractions show host Banks Lee posing in the same spot now and 14 years ago.

Before it was Krustyland and The Simpsons Ride, it was the Institute of Future Technology and the Back To The Future ride at Universal Studios Florida. The Institute building didn't actually have a NASA space shuttle on top of it. This was an optical illusion created by placing your camera on a certain spot provided by Universal. Although this particular illusion photo opportunity is gone, others can occasionally be found in the park.

We asked our Facebook followers to tell us their favorite meet and greet character in Orlando's theme parks. Here's what they said:



Michael Fridgen

My favorite is Pinocchio because he moves like he's made of wood. Attached is a photo of my husband and me attempting to get a photo with Pinocchio, when we were photo bombed by Geppetto! (We've been to all the Disney Parks around the globe. Orlando definitely has the best procedure for accessing the characters. It's a bit of a mob scene at Disneyland Paris. However, in Tokyo, you can see a lot more of the minor characters that don't make appearances at the U.S. parks.)

Stephanie Marie Robinson

Mulan at Epcot. She doesn't rush and asks the little girls if they want to be themselves as strong warriors like her when they grow up.

James Galliford

That is really hard to narrow down for me. I think the picture I like the most is with the Beast in the old photo spot in the France Pavilion at Epcot. Beauty and the Beast being my favorite Disney movie, I still haven't gotten to New Fantasyland, so I bet that would be my new favorite place to meet Beast in his castle. I also love to meet Mary Poppins on the carousel. Who doesn't?

Karen Christensen Goff

Stitch, because he doesn't take

boring photos. He gets the kids to be all naughty with him - sticking out tongues, etc.

Braedon Godin

It would have to be the Fab 5 at Epcot's character spot because you are able to actually spend a little time with them before moving on and on.

David Lowe

My favorite is Cinderella because she helped make one of my favorite recent memories. My wife and I took my six-year-old daughter, Emma, and one-year-old son, Alex, to Disney World this summer along with my parents. The look of joy and amazement on my daughter's face when she walked up to meet Cinderella and started talking to her, was the highlight of my entire trip far above the rides and shows!

Teresa Cross

Spider-Man at Universal Studios has always been one of our favorites. We have never felt rushed to visit him and he is always very entertaining, jumping up on counters and running all over while always staying in character!

Becky Hoh

Probably Shamu. SeaWorld has always been my favorite park (still is despite the negative publicity they are receiving right now) and getting a picture standing by its trademark emblem just makes the trip more special for me. I also like getting my picture taken with A'lure's villainess (I am not sure what she is exactly, maybe a siren or something), also at SeaWorld. I don't know what it is that attracts me to her, maybe her costume,

maybe her "evilness". I can't quite put my finger on just one reason why I like her, but I get my picture with her every time I am there.

Nicola McAndrew

On our recent trip, two characters stood out. Rapunzel at the Magic Kingdom. She took her time with both our children and even got my four-year-old son up for photos after saying "Princesses were too girly". The second character that exceed expectations was Spider-Man at Islands of Adventure. Again this character had a good conversation with my kids (and with us) and got them pulling all the super hero moves. Both characters made memories for us all.

Kimberly Masimore

Mickey Mouse! He is the one who started it all. No visit is complete until I have my picture taken with him! (Oh yeah and my kids picture too!)

Emily Wright

The most impressive are now the Transformers characters. The first time I saw them (at age 32), I let out an involuntary "WOW!!!" and ran over to get a picture. As for cute and fun, I like Stitch and Mickey. Stitch is my husband's favorite character and the pictures/interactions are always neat. You never know what Stitch is going to do! Mickey is timeless. When we meet or see him I still have the excitement and involuntary grin that I had as a little girl meeting him for the first time.

Jeremy Miller

Aladdin and Jasmine in Morocco at Epcot. They were by far the most interactive I've seen to date. You

have to get in line early since they fill up quickly, but I'd wait with my daughter again in a heartbeat.

Tony Noone

Ariel has always been my favorite. I've done many meet and greets with her but one in particular stands out in my mind. I was spending a day in Magic Kingdom to celebrate my birthday. This was before New Fantasyland opened so Ariel in human form was doing meets in Adventureland. When it was my turn, I told Ariel she was my favorite Princess (and Eric told me we had that in common). We chatted for a bit and Ariel noticed my pin collection on my lanyard (the majority of which were of herself) She started talking about her collection and asked if I knew her favorite item in her collection. Having seen The Little Mermaid a million times I instantly knew it was the Dinglehopper. She asked me how many Dinglehoppers I had in my collection at home. While I mentally counted the number of forks in the silverware drawer at home Ariel turned around and was digging through a box behind her. I finally answered "around 20." Ariel said "Now you have 21! Happy Birthday!" When I got home I bought a special case of the Dinglehopper. Everyone else sees it as a simple plastic fork. To me it's the best birthday gift I ever got.

Dana Giuliano Spinelli

The Seven Dwarfs when they make their appearance at Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party because they're so hard to find and Dopey is my fav.

WRITE TO US!

"Like" Orlando Attractions Magazine on Facebook to keep up with all the latest news, and comment and answer next issue's Facebook question.

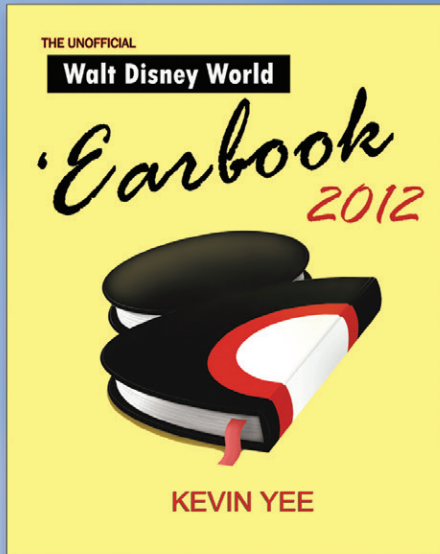


We want your letters and photos! If you have any **comments** about the magazine, **questions** about traveling to Orlando or fun stories or photos to share, simply e-mail us directly at info@attractionsmagazine.com.

INDEPENDENT DISNEY BOOKS

BY AUTHOR KEVIN YEE

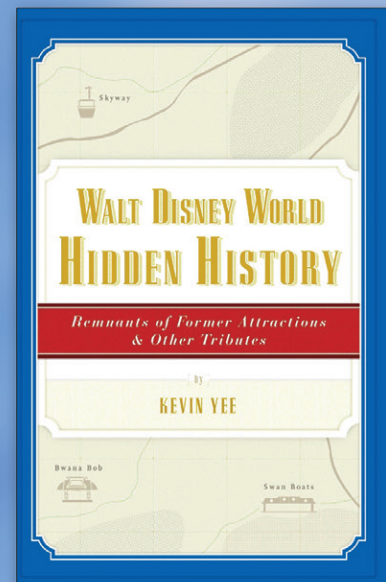
Enjoy trivia, insider tributes, and historical facts about Walt Disney World? Kevin Yee has spent twenty years working in, researching, and publishing about Disney theme parks.



NEW!

Re-live the changes to Walt Disney World in 2012 via hundreds of fan photos. All rides, shows, shops, and restaurants that were added or removed are celebrated here. It's all here, from removals like Snow White, the original Test Track, and original Dumbo, to additions like Storybook Circus, Little Mermaid, Art of Animation Resort, revised Test Track, and dozens more new offerings.

“Walt Disney World Hidden History” explores the many hidden tributes and references to bygone attractions that populate the theme parks. The individual items discussed are all things you can actually point to at the parks, so the book provides a kind of walking tour of the parks that yields a glimpse of the deeper history percolating below the surface.



Kevin Yee is also the author of three books about Disneyland, the most recent being *Mouse Trap*, an intimate recounting of what a decade as a front-line worker at Disneyland looks like.

*All books are available from Amazon.com



MICKEY'S NOT SO SCARY HALLOWEEN PARTY

Location: Magic Kingdom

Dates: Sept. 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27, 29; Oct. 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 14, 17, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 31; Nov. 1

Cost: \$51 to \$73

This event invites you to celebrate Halloween by trick-or-treating in the park, enjoying select attractions, a Halloween fireworks show and parade. New this year is a Monsters Inc. dance party in Tomorrowland and a meet and greet with Jack Skellington and Sally from "The Nightmare Before Christmas."



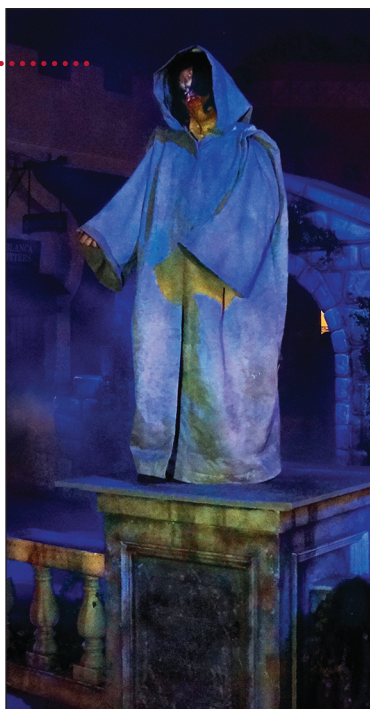
HOWL-O-SCREAM

Location: Busch Gardens Tampa

Dates: Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday from Sept. 27 to Oct. 26.

Cost: \$30 to \$85

Once every century, on precisely the thirteenth year, evil comes out to play. Thirteen evils, to be exact. Try to escape the 13 including The Hunter, The Banshee, and The Voodoo Queen at this year's event featuring three new haunted houses, five returning houses with a twist, scare zones, roaming hordes and more.



WALT DISNEY WORLD SWAN AND DOLPHIN FOOD & WINE CLASSIC

Location: Swan and Dolphin Resort

Dates: Oct. 18 & 19

Cost: \$80

Calling all food and wine lovers, stroll along the scenic Crescent Lake and immerse yourself in a culinary festival featuring tastings from award-winning resort restaurants and wine vineyards around the world.

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR

Location: SeaWorld Orlando

Dates: Oct. 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, and 26-27.

Cost: Included with theme park admission
Kids of all ages can enjoy all there is to offer at SeaWorld as they trick-or-treat around the park, meet some Halloween sea creatures and watch Sesame Street's Countdown to Halloween show.



BRICK OR TREAT

Location: Legoland Florida

Dates: Every Saturday and Sunday in Oct.

Cost: Included with theme park admission

During Brick-or-Treat, ghouls, ghosts and goblins will descend on Miniland USA transforming it into a fun, haunted scavenger hunt featuring trick-or-treating and much more.

HALLOWEEN HORROR NIGHTS

Location: Universal Studios

Dates: Sept. 20-21, 26-29; Oct. 3-6, 10-13, 16-20, 23-27 & 31; Nov. 1-2

Cost: \$38.99 to \$91.99

Face horror's most terrifying creatures in the flesh featuring all-new haunted houses, spine-tingling scare zones themed to AMC's "The Walking Dead", live shows including The Rocky Horror Picture Show and more. Halloween Horror Nights 23 haunted houses include: AMC's The Walking Dead, Evil Dead, An American Werewolf in London, Cabin in the Woods and more.

SEAWORLD'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Location: SeaWorld Orlando

Dates: Select dates from Nov. 23 through Dec. 31

Cost: Included with theme park admission

Celebrate the season SeaWorld style featuring The Polar Express Experience, an ice skating show, the sea of trees, a new Sesame Street Christmas show and holiday-themed animal shows.

We've chosen our favorite upcoming events to spotlight. You don't want to miss them on your next trip to Orlando.

All events and dates are subject to change. Please check with the proper organization before attending.
Check AttractionsMagazine.com for up-to-date happenings in the Orlando area.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL

Location: Epcot

Dates: Sept. 27 to Nov. 11

Cost: Included with theme park admission
Go on a culinary journey around the world without even leaving Orlando. This year's event includes food, wine, beer, culinary classes, parties and a live concert series.



HOLIDAYS AT WALT DISNEY WORLD

Location: Animal Kingdom, Hollywood Studios, Epcot

Dates: Animal Kingdom Nov. 9-Jan. 2; Hollywood Studios Nov. 8-Jan. 5; Epcot Nov. 29-Dec. 30.

Cost: Included with theme park admission
Disney's Animal Kingdom will take part in the festivities by transforming its parade into "Mickey's Jingle Jungle Parade." Holiday lights will take over the backlot of Disney's Hollywood Studios for the annual "Osborne Family Spectacle of Dancing Lights." At Epcot, experience holiday traditions around the world followed by a Christmas story narrated by a celebrity guest each and every night.

CHRISTMAS BRICKTACULAR

Location: Legoland Florida

Dates: Weekends in December

Cost: Included with theme park admission
'Tis the season for Christmas Bricktacular with a 270,000 brick Christmas tree, festive decorations and daily appearances by Santa.



CHRISTMAS TOWN

Location: Busch Gardens Tampa

Dates: Select dates from Nov. 29 through Dec. 23

Cost: \$10 to \$40

This year, Busch Gardens Tampa's Christmas Town is getting bigger and better with a nighttime holiday wonderland of wintry surprises featuring more than 20 Christmas attractions, snow, shows, rides, dining and shopping options and themed areas throughout the park.



HOLIDAYS AT UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

Location: Universal Orlando Resort

Dates: Dec. 7 through Jan. 4

Cost: Included with theme park admission
Experience the holidays from a Who's point of view at Islands of Adventure's Grinchmas, featuring the musical adaptation of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." Over at Universal Studios, guests can enjoy the Macy's Holiday Parade, and performances by Mannheim Steamroller on select dates.



MICKEY'S VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Location: Magic Kingdom

Dates: Nov. 8, 11, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22; Dec. 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20

Cost: \$53 to \$67

Celebrate the holiday season the Disney way, with free hot cocoa and cookies, holiday themed shows, a special parade and fireworks, and falling snow on Main Street with your favorite characters dressed in their winter outfits.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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disneyworld.com
(407) 939-6244

Universal Orlando Resort
universalorlando.com
(407) 363-8000

SeaWorld Orlando
seaworld.com/orlando
(800) 327-2424

Busch Gardens Tampa
buschgardens.com/tampa
(888) 800-5447

Legoland Florida
legoland.com
(877) 350-5346

Swan and Dolphin Resorts
swandolphin.com
(407) 934-4000

STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

We Just Can't Wait to Be Na'vi

LOCATION: DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

The Festival of the Lion King show will be moving to an all-new theater in the Africa section of the park in early 2014. The show is expected to stay the same with the theater being highly themed. While it hasn't been confirmed, it is rumored to be moving to make way for the upcoming Avatar land.



PHOTO BY BANKS LEE



STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

I-Drive Live Rising Up

LOCATION: INTERNATIONAL DRIVE

Construction on I-Drive Live is well underway. The complex will feature an observation wheel, Madame Tussauds wax museum, Sea Life aquarium, shops and restaurants. They hope to have it all open by 2015. The Wyndham Resort at the corner of Sand Lake and I-Drive has also been partially demolished to make way for a new shopping complex.



PHOTO BY BANKS LEE

STATUS: NOW OPEN

There's a New Mermaid In The Kingdom

LOCATION: WALT DISNEY WORLD

The Main Street Bakery in the Magic Kingdom has reopened with a new look and is now offering a full menu of Starbucks beverages, breakfast sandwiches and classic baked goods from the old Main Street Bakery. The cups are co-branded to include the famous Starbucks mermaid on one side and Disney icon silhouettes on the other. The Main Street Bakery does accept Starbucks gift cards and mobile apps. Guests can earn Starbucks Rewards but they can't be redeemed at the Disney location. The Starbucks at Epcot's Fountain View should also be open as you read this.



STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Downtown ... Disney Springs

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN DISNEY

With Downtown Disney being transformed into Disney Springs in a few years, construction is already heavily underway. Parking lots J and K are now closed to make room for the first parking garage expected to open next year. The old Comedy Warehouse building has been demolished and Cap'n Jack's Restaurant is now closed. A new bridge from the West Side to the backside of Pleasure Island is being built to allow guests to bypass the construction. The retail store Curl has moved next to Splitsville and Apricot Lane has closed for good.



STATUS: NOW GREETING

There's a New Princess in Town

LOCATION: DISNEY'S
HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

Disney's newest princess is now meeting and greeting guests at Disney's Hollywood Studios. Sofia The First, star of the self-titled Disney Junior show is meeting and greeting guests daily by the Disney Junior: Live! building. Jake from "Jake and the Neverland Pirates" is also meeting guests there.



STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Things Are About to Get Spicy

LOCATION: EPCOT

Construction is going verticle on Epcot's newest restaurant, 'Spice Road Table.' The restaurant will be waterfront at the Morocco Pavilion and will be serving small plates and tapas. It's is expected to open later this year.



STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Hi Ho! Hi Ho! Off to 2014 We Go

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

With The Seven Dwarfs Mine Train set to open next spring, construction is in full swing. Mountains are rising high above New Fantasyland, signs of the Dwarfs mines are starting to appear and foliage is being planted around the area. Get ready, 'cause you're about to go on the wildest ride in the forest!



PHOTO BY DON GWOREK

STATUS: NOW SWASHBUCKLING

Yo Ho, Yo Ho! A Pirates Game For All!

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

"A Pirate's Adventure: Treasures of the Seven Seas" is now open in Adventureland at the Magic Kingdom. The new interactive game sends guests on various adventures around Adventureland using a pirate map and magic talisman to help them locate the Treasures of the Seven Seas. The game is included with your park admission and is available to play daily from park open to close.



STATUS: NOW RISING

Falcon's Fury Rising

LOCATION: BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA

Busch Gardens recently dropped some really big news. Coming in spring of 2014, Falcon's Fury will take guests' to new heights in a first of its kind drop tower. With no connecting structures, it will be the tallest freestanding drop tower in North America. Falcon's Fury will stand at 335 feet and take riders soaring 60 mph straight down. Like its bird of prey namesake, riders will pivot 90 degrees in midair to a face-down dive position. An instant later they'll plunge at 3.5 Gs. Construction in the Timbuktu area of the park has already begun.



PHOTO BY NICK RIGHI/BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA

STATUS: NOW SHOWING

Move It! Move It!

LOCATION: BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA

Join Alex, Gloria, King Julien and the penguins from DreamWorks Animation's "Madagascar" in Busch Gardens Tampa's newest live stage show, "Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation." The 20-minute musical stage show is performed multiple times each weekend and features singers, dancers, a live band and your favorite Madagascar characters. Guests can also meet the characters following the performance in Stanleyville Theater, which has been renovated and is now an enclosed and air-conditioned theater. Another Madagascar show is rumored for SeaWorld next year.



STATUS: NOW SEASONAL

Off-Season Brings Seasonal Closures

LOCATION: BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA

Following the trends of many other Central Florida theme parks, Busch Gardens Tampa has changed two of its dining options to seasonal operation. Both the top level of the Crown Colony and Garden Gate Cafe will be closing in the off-peak months but are said to be reopening at a later date.



STATUS: LAUNCHING SOON

More Magic Coming Soon

LOCATION: WALT DISNEY WORLD

MyMagic+ is getting closer to launching with tests expanding to more guests. New signage and queues have been added to attractions all around the parks for Fastpass+. Covers and accessories for the MagicBands have also gone on sale at select Disney resorts.



STATUS: PLAYING SOON

Roarin' New Games

LOCATION:
UNIVERSAL'S
ISLANDS
OF ADVENTURE

Construction walls have popped up along the walkways of the Jurassic Park area. The walls are rumored to be the start of construction of various new games of skill similar to those in the Lost Continent, which are rumored to be demolished when The Wizarding World of Harry Potter expansion opens next year.



PHOTO BY BANKS LEE

STATUS: NOW SHOWING

Join 'The Royal Celebration'

LOCATION: OFF U.S. 192

In honor of their 25th anniversary, Arabian Nights has launched a new show called 'The Royal Celebration.' The story provides a new twist on an ancient tale that centers around the attraction's legendary Arabian horses. The all new experience includes new acts along with guests favorites.



STATUS: CHANGING

New Dining Galore

**LOCATION: UNIVERSAL
CITYWALK**

The changes don't stop at the Universal Orlando Resort. Over in CityWalk, Pastamóre has closed its counter service area for a lengthy refurbishment, which is rumored to become a second restaurant which will offer quick and table service. Latin Quarter is also now being remodeled. Rumors say it will become a different Latin food restaurant.



STATUS: NOW OPEN

Duff Beer for Me, Duff Beer for You

LOCATION: UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA

The final phase of the Simpson's area expansion is now complete, offering guests a chance to grab a Duff Beer at the Duff Brewery, chow down on a Lard Lad donut, meet some citizens of Springfield and ride the new Kang and Kodos' Twirl 'n' Hurl. The alien-themed spinning ride has guests helping Kang and Kodos attack Springfield. Around the ride are sensors designed as characters from the hit animated series, and positioning your ride vehicle with the sensors will trigger some fun elements.

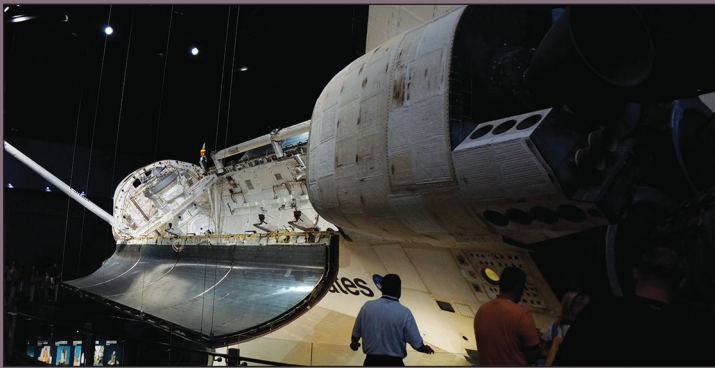


STATUS: NOW OPEN

5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Atlantis!

LOCATION: KENNEDY SPACE CENTER
VISITOR COMPLEX

The world's most comprehensive attraction devoted to the space shuttle program recently opened. Space Shuttle Atlantis is the new, 90,000-square-foot, \$100 million home of the priceless, historic spacecraft that helps tell the story of NASA's 30-year Space Shuttle Program. From only a few feet away, guests can be up-close with a 360-degree view of Atlantis. The shuttle is showcased as if it were in orbit — as only astronauts have had a chance to see it. Atlantis is elevated 30 feet off the ground and rotated at a 43.21-degree angle with its payload bay doors open and Canadarm (robotic arm) extended.



STATUS: MINIONIZING SOON

The Minions Are Spreading

LOCATION: UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

Now kids can be just like Margo, Agnes and Edith from "Despicable Me" and sleep in hollowed out missiles among hundreds of Minions once the new Despicable Me kids suites debut this fall at Loews Portofino Bay Hotel. Each of the hotel's 18 kids suites will feature the new theme. The suites are available for reservations for stays beginning Oct. 1



STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

London's Calling!

LOCATION: UNIVERSAL
ORLANDO RESORT

The facades of London are starting to take shape in the expansion of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Set to open next year, the new area will bring the world of Harry Potter to both Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure, allowing guests to visit Diagon Alley and London along with the former Hogwarts and Hogsmeade areas.

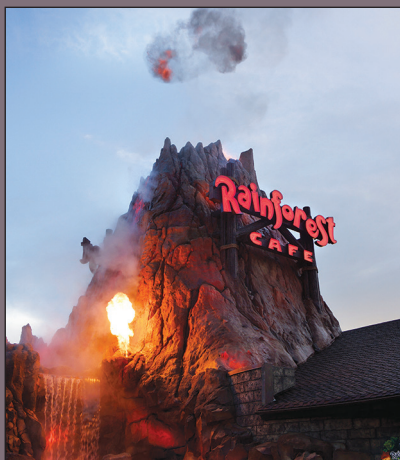


STATUS: NOW ERUPTING

This Bar Is On Fire

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN DISNEY

The Lava Lounge is now open at the Rainforest Cafe. Just to the left of the main entrance, the Lava Lounge is a small bar featuring a volcano erupting with fire every half hour each evening. The bar features specialty drinks for about \$9 each and a selection of appetizers.



STATUS: RETIRED

Million Points of Musical Light No More

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

Walt Disney World recently confirmed the nighttime parade, SpectroMagic, has officially been retired. SpectroMagic ended its run on June 5, 2010 and the classic Main Street Electrical Parade is now performing regularly in its place.



STATUS: NOW SERVING

Ooh La La and Yum Yum

LOCATION: EPCOT

A new ice cream shop has opened in the former bakery space at the France pavilion. L'Artisan des Glaces features 16 flavors, all made in-house with fresh ingredients. Guests can also get a shot of liquor on top — served in a martini glass. The bakery has moved to a new spot further back in the pavilion and was renamed Les Halles Boulangerie and Patisserie.



Photo Finds

Orlando is always filled with fun things to see and our photographers are there to capture it all.

Visit our Website for videos and a gallery of more photos.
AttractionsMagazine.com

Before the 2013 "American Idol" finalists performed in concert in downtown Orlando on Aug. 1, they stopped by Disney's Hollywood Studios to appear in a special **Limited Time Magic motorcade**. They also made a quick appearance at The American Idol Experience finale show and gave everyone in the audience tickets to their show.



PHOTOS BY DANIEL ANDERSON



Disney held a second **Long Lost Friends** week at the Magic Kingdom in mid-July as part of Limited Time Magic. Meeting guests this time were characters from "Robin Hood", "Chicken Little", "Princess and the Frog" and "Song of the South".





A special **Limited Time Magic pep rally** was held at Disney's Hollywood Studios all summer long. Mike and Sully from "**Monsters University**" joined the Scare Supply band, a monstrous DJ and MU cheerleaders to entertain guests each evening.



There was too much happening at **Disney's D23 Expo** in Anaheim Calif. to talk about here, but we wanted to highlight some of the special character appearances. It was a **first look** at Disney's versions of **Spider-Man, Iron Man** and **Captain America** (look for the latter on the Disney Magic cruise ship), and **The Dreamfinder** and **Figment** made an unannounced limited time return, meeting guests briefly in the Parks and Resorts Pavilion.



Some of the stars from Disney Channel's "**Teen Beach Movie**" surprised guests at Typhoon Lagoon water park in late June to kick off the **Teen Beach Movie Dance Party**. Beach games were held daily all summer-long at the park.



VERSUS

WE PUT ATTRACTIONS HEAD-TO-HEAD

By Banks Lee

FUN SPOT AMERICA
OFF INTERNATIONAL DRIVE, ORLANDO

vs.

FUN SPOT USA
U.S. 192, KISSIMMEE

COASTERS



FUN SPOT AMERICA

Both parks offer a kiddie coaster, but with the opening of Freedom Flyer and White Lightning, Orlando's only wooden coaster, the America park edges out USA and their spinning Rockstar Coaster.



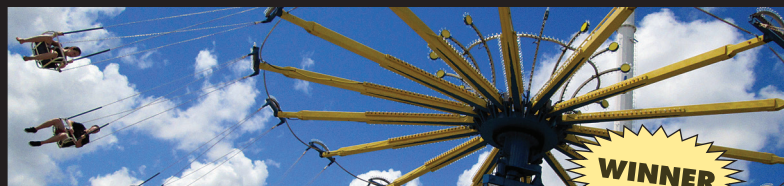
FUN SPOT USA

THRILL RIDES



FUN SPOT AMERICA

America and USA have several of the same thrill rides such as the Tilt-A-Whirl and Paratrooper, but USA has a more thrilling selection with Hot Seat, Screaming Eagle and YoYo.



FUN SPOT USA

GO-KART TRACKS



FUN SPOT AMERICA

With the expansion of the Commander track at America, the park now includes three multi-level tracks as opposed to USA's two tracks.



FUN SPOT USA

SKYCOASTER



FUN SPOT AMERICA

Fun Spot USA has the privilege of owning the world's tallest SkyCoaster at 300 feet. However, the second tallest (250 feet) can be found at America.



FUN SPOT USA

LOCATION



FUN SPOT AMERICA

Both Fun Spot America and USA have great locations. America is right on International Drive just minutes away from Universal Orlando, and USA is on highway 192, next to Old Town and minutes away from Walt Disney World.




FUN SPOT USA

NEW FROM THE INTREPID TRAVELER

ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO READ THIS BOOK?

**Walt Disney World is for
little kids, princesses, and
dorks, right? WRONG!**

There's more than enough at WDW to keep the two-fisted, thrill-seeking, hard-drinking, meat-eating he-man of the house happy as a caveman with a mammoth rib.

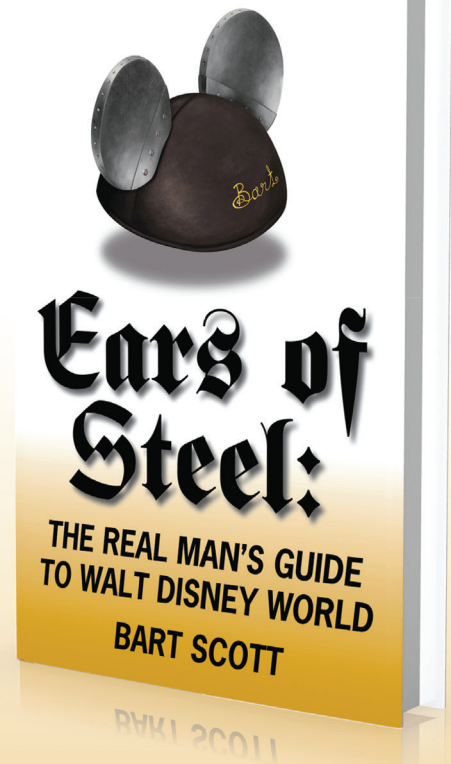


Hey, gals! If the guy you love is resisting the lure of WDW, he *needs* this book!

Bart Scott is the real deal — a real guy with big appetites, firm convictions, and a healthy disdain for pretentiousness in all

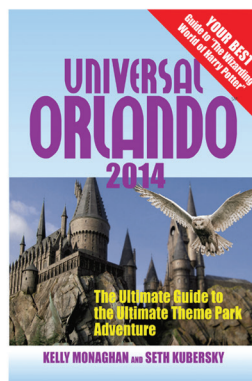
its forms. He's also big enough to admit that even the toughest hombre's heart melts a little when his own little princess falls under the spell of Disney magic.

Bart delivers an honest, straight-from-the-shoulder, and frequently hilarious look at everything in Walt Disney World that keeps real men coming back, with all the sissy stuff glossed over or ignored entirely.



Available at fine bookstores everywhere or from the publisher at <http://intrepidtraveler.com>

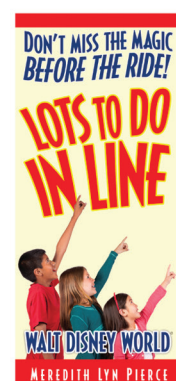
ALSO FROM
The
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New 2014 Edition!



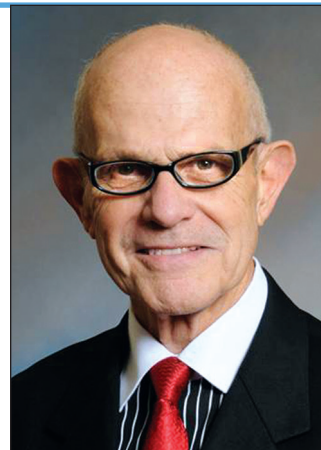
"Insanely readable."
DisneyHipsters.com



"I highly recommend it!"
WDWhints.com

From music consultant to Disney Legend ...

Ron Logan's work can be found in every Disney theme park and beyond



Where do you start with Ron Logan? A meeting with the former executive vice president and executive producer for Walt Disney Entertainment is like taking your own theme park ride covering the last 50 years of Disney entertainment. On one side you spot the Spectromagic parade, whilst on the other is the Fantasmic spectacular. Behind you is the film premier for Pocahontas in Central Park jostling for space with five half-time Super Bowl shows, and the opening ceremony for Epcot, parks in California, Paris and Tokyo, all have their own menu, the list simply goes on and on. It's a long fun ride.



One of the attractions Ron is most proud to have worked on is the now retired Spectromagic parade at the Magic Kingdom.

Ron and Disney Legend Marty Sklar pose with Donald Duck at the Disney Legends Induction Ceremony.



Ron has had an interest in entertainment since graduating from UCLA in the early '60s with a degree in music, followed with an MA. During this period he was able to earn a living as a professional trumpet player, producer and conductor. His first break came in 1960 when Disney hired him as a music consultant. Between then and 1977 he mixed work at Disney with the director of bands at James Monroe High School, in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles. In 1977 he was offered the position of director of music at Walt Disney World. The next 24 years saw increasing opportunities, with him rising to the executive vice president position responsible for all Disney "Live Entertainment" worldwide. In 2007 he was honored at the Walt Disney Studios with the rare Disney Legends award for parks and resorts.

What made you decide to make music and entertainment your career?

I lived in the town of Leavenworth, Kan., which is famous for – its prisons! The actual town is small, and at the time it seemed as if everyone was into the arts. I learned to play violin, trumpet, piano and even 'tap dancing'. I found I was pretty good in the arts, especially the trumpet and it gave me the chance to stand out, build confidence and perform. When I reached the eighth grade our family moved to Los Angeles.

How did you get your big break?

In L.A. I found I could earn money playing the trumpet for bands and I got a job playing in a Roadhouse owned by Tex Williams. It paid \$15 a night, which was great money for a 15-year-old in the late '50s! This made me realize I could earn a living doing something I enjoyed. I then worked my way through college going to school during the day, playing clubs at night. UCLA had some outstanding musicians from whom I learned a great deal. In the evenings I was gaining valuable professional experience, even spending a year with jazz trumpeter 'Chet' Baker. Following on from director of bands, orchestra and jazz at James Monroe High School, I moved in the mid '60s to Long Beach City College with

a similar role. Disneyland asked me at that time to be a part-time music consultant for the park.

It must have been a very different Disney in 1960s.

What was it like?

Yes, it was a different time and era. Walt was still actively very present and there was only Disneyland, so who knew where his dream was going to go? At that time he was still in strong control of his vision, of what the park and the park entertainment should look and sound like. On one occasion I was leading a band down



One of the iconic productions Ron worked on was the aerial spectacular Skyleidoscope at Epcot. The show opened in 1985.

PHOTOS BY JEFF LANGE

Main Street USA and decided we should play a 'rock and roll' number. It was Walt Disney himself who sent me a note that said: "Main Street U.S.A is a reconstruction of an 'old' American town; they didn't play rock and roll in 1910 - 1920." He had a very good point. In those days they liked to really keep an eye on brand image. It would be interesting to see what Walt might say today?

You arrived in Florida in 1977.

What was your role at the start?

I was given the opportunity to join Disney full-time and lead the Walt Disney World Band. I must have done something right as they kept promoting me and giving me new and exciting roles. I also learned it was wise not to say no to Michael Eisner (then CEO of Disney)! It's also



important to mention that Michael Eisner had great interest and influence in building up the entertainment and show side of the Disney offering, allowing me to spend money and produce some iconic moments of Disney history. Putting a direct monetary 'value' on live entertainment to the guest experience is very difficult, but we managed to come up with a formula, based partly on guest feedback, which high-



Ron not only worked on the Beauty and the Beast Live on Stage show at Disney's Hollywood Studios, but also the Broadway version.



A look at the American/Canadian bison in Disneyland Paris' Wild West Show.

lighted how well our product attracted and retained guests.

You have been involved in so many iconic productions, from the Disney World Christmas Parade to SkylineDance, and Lights, Motors, Action to Tapestry of Nations. What makes them special?

Consistency in quality of product – always exceed our guest's expectation! In the end, the guests are our best promoters. I was lucky. I had a broad artistic background whether playing an instrument, dancing, conducting or singing. This gave me an appreciation for all the performing arts and bringing them together with a great story. I like to take different art forms and put them together in new and exciting situations. One great example of this fusion of performance would be Tarzan Rocks at Disney's Animal Kingdom.

Do you have any productions that you are particularly proud of?

Many, but I tend to see the ones that made a little bit of Disney history as special. In Epcot I decided to use land, air and sea and put a show into the huge lagoon. This ended up as SkylineDance with the Epcot navy, motorized surf boards and ultralight aircraft flying around. It certainly was a challenge. When Disneyland Paris opened we had a location that had very limited facilities for visitors in the local area for evening meals, etc. Michael Eisner and the team spotted this and gave me the challenge to come up with something American and as a dinner show. That resulted in the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show which is still running today. We did not just produce a 'standard' show. We researched the animals, the Indians, the language and even many of the artifacts to try and keep a depth of realism to it. The challenge was the bison (buffalo). European bison are not the

same as the U.S. bison. They are smaller and didn't look right to me. So we needed to get U.S. buffalo to France, but you were not allowed at the time to transport them into France from the U.S. But you could transport them from Canada to France. So our buffalo had to take a trip to Canada first. Disney has a great way of making things happen!

Disney is well known for their meticulous preparation. Does it always go to plan?

Most of the time it does go absolutely according to plan. Because we were Disney, we had a reputation to maintain. The critics and competition were always waiting in the wings to have their say. So before any show opened, we practiced, tested, practiced and tested again to get it right.

But on occasion things go wrong?

Yes of course. Michael Eisner was visiting Epcot to see our new show, Illuminations 2000 Reflections of Earth. It's a technically complex show and involves a lot of coordination and timing with a floating globe as the

center of attraction. All was working well until the globe started to float out. Instead of beautiful scenes being displayed on the huge video surface, all that everyone saw was a color test signal. We all wanted to know what had gone wrong. In the end, we discovered that so many people had been nervous, checking and double checking to make sure that everything worked that nobody had remembered to push the one button on the globe that turned the video signal on. But it's a reflective experience, because of this small error we rewrote our technical procedures.

Did your roll cover other areas that Disney was developing all around the globe?

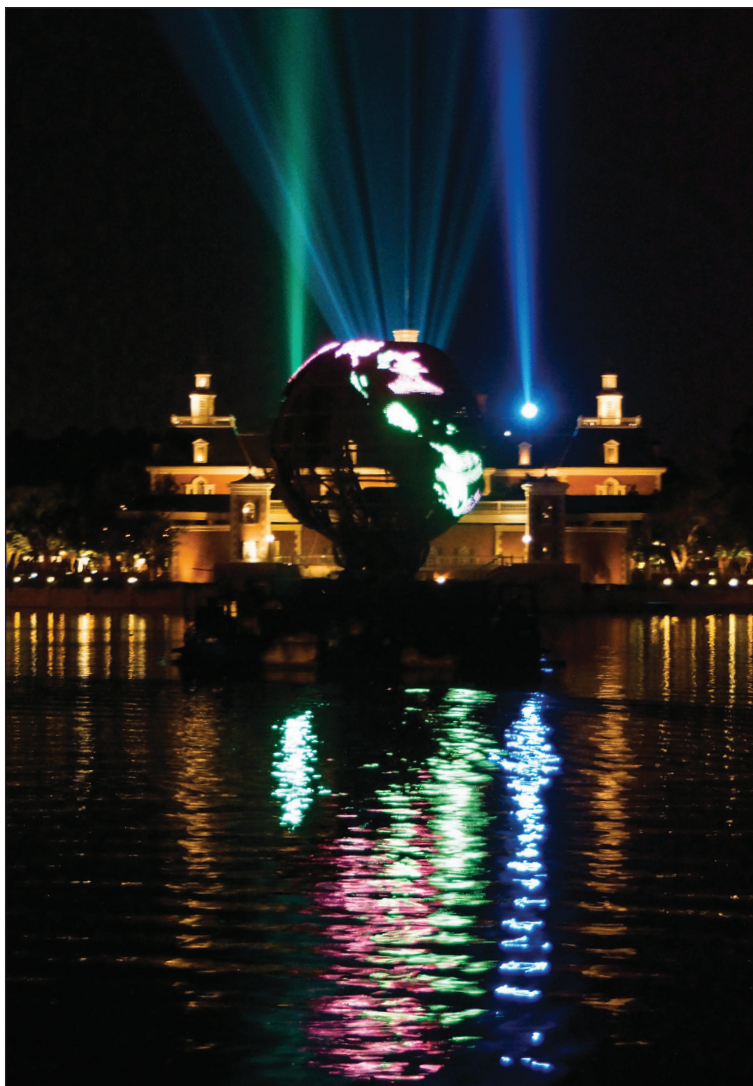
Yes I was involved in all 11 Disney parks at one point or another, plus Super Bowl half-time shows and special events like park openings and film premiers. I was also fortunate to be given the founding role for Disney Theatrical Events. Our first project was taking "Beauty and the Beast – A New Musical" to Broadway. Now it's a huge success around the world. People forget that at the time we proposed doing this, in the early '90s, many shows on Broadway were fairly dark and the idea of a Disney musical was a risk. Well it became one of Broadway's longest running shows and is still touring after 18 years.

You retired from Disney in 2001, do you still have the 'entertainment bug'?

Yes. I started a consulting company called Entertainment Arts in 2001. There, I can use my Walt Disney Entertainment team, all of whom have retired from Disney. In 2003, I became an associate professor at Rosen College of Hospitality Management where I teach Theme Park and Attraction Management and a class entitled Entertainment Arts and I am also the chief creative officer for Dreamvision Entertainment Company, which deals in theme parks, movies and live show spectacles worldwide!

What do you miss from your Disney days?

I miss seeing Mickey, Donald, Goofy and the gang every day. But I also miss the creative gamesmanship – The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat.



When then Disney CEO Michael Eisner came to see the new Illuminations show at Epcot, the globe only showed a color test signal because someone forgot to push a button.

Roller Coasters in Orlando

By "SKIPPER" BEN REBSTOCK

Sure, it's taken us a few years, but we are finally here — the Top 10 Roller Coasters in Orlando. So, move over "Small World" because it's time to strap in, buckle up, lower the lap bar and hold on tight as we break down the best coasters in Orlando's theme parks.

10

Dragon Challenge Universal's Islands of Adventure

Formerly known as "Dueling Dragons" before Harry Potter moved in, Dragon Challenge is two coasters in one. The inverted coasters feature two distinct tracks (Chinese Fireball and Hungarian Horntail) that intertwine with each other. On numerous occasions, it feels like you're going to hit the other coaster, only to dart out of danger at the last moment. Don't be fooled, these are two different rides, so be sure to experience both. And you might want to bring a sack lunch with you as Dragon Challenge features one of the longest queues you'll ever walk. But, on the bright side, at least you get to see the Triwizard Cup on your way.



9

Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit Universal Studios

Opening in 2009, Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit changed the landscape of Universal Studios. The bright red track twists and turns past and through existing show buildings, and its placement at the front of the park is hard to walk past. It sucks you in by offering riders the ability to pick the song you listen to while you ride. It makes you want to ride again and again and again. The vertical lift into the face-first drop leads you into my favorite part of the ride, the corkscrew loop (yes, a loop where you never actually go upside down). At 65 mph, you shoot through the park, and even take a swing outside through CityWalk. Sure, the soundtrack could use a little updating, but those in the know can access the "hidden songs" (Search our website for a full list). There's nothing like riding an awesome roller coaster to the Muppets singing "Rainbow Connection." Give it a try!

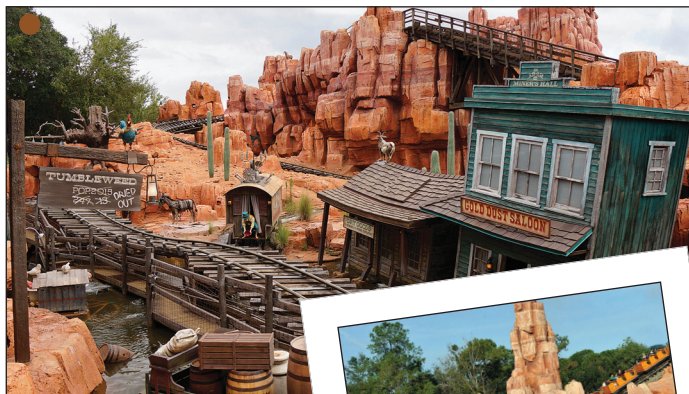


8

Big Thunder Mountain Railroad

Magic Kingdom

I know, it's pretty surprising that the "wildest ride in the wilderness" would be this far down the list, but that speaks more to the wealth of Orlando coasters that have opened since Big Thunder opened in 1980 than anything it lacks. BTMRR (as it's known by cast members) still stands large over Frontierland. While it's far from the tallest or fastest coaster in the area, it's one of, if not the best themed around, which goes a long way in making your ride so enjoyable. From the animals that line the track, your brisk encounter with the town of Tumbleweed to surviving falling rocks, Big Thunder Mountain Railroad is an absolute classic, and even more fun when you ride at night.



7

Kraken

SeaWorld

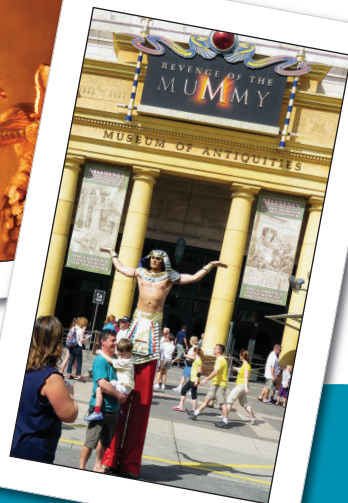
In 2000, SeaWorld unleashed the Kraken on theme park visitors in Orlando, and it's been thrilling guests ever since. The beast by the lake is the only floorless roller coaster in Orlando, giving you the feeling that you are literally just hanging on by the edge of your seat. With a top speed of 65 mph, the Kraken tosses you around like a rag doll, taking you upside down seven times. This monster is one of the most extreme coasters in Florida and should not be missed on your next visit.

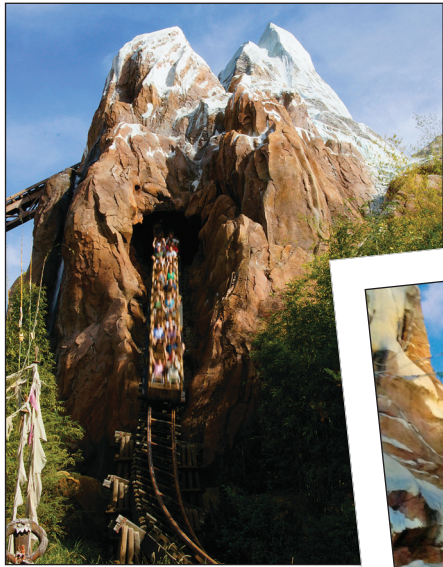
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Revenge of The Mummy

Universal Studios

The Mummy is the perfect mix of dark ride and roller coaster. It starts with an impressive queue that puts you into the story (the set of the Mummy movie is haunted). Creepy cast members keep the tone eerie, giving you a thumbs down as your cart moves into the ride. After you give your soul to the bad guy, your car launches into the only haunted coaster in Florida. It was also the first ride to introduce the "false ending," which we won't spoil here. If you've been on this ride, you know how much fun it is. And if you haven't, you are in for a real treat. Now if I could only get my cup of coffee!





5 Expedition Everest - Legend of the Forbidden Mountain

Disney's Animal Kingdom

When it comes to design, Expedition Everest takes the cake. What the Imagineers did in designing the Forbidden Mountain is simply a work of art. When it comes to the ride, it's great. Everest is fast, has some great drops, and everyone loves the backwards section of the ride. But what keeps this coaster from moving up much higher on our list is the Yeti. When working, Everest might be the best ride in Orlando. But with the Yeti standing still for the last several years, it has to take some effect on my rankings. Maybe one day the Yeti will return to his former glory and Everest will reclaim its throne ... we can only hope.



4 Manta

SeaWorld

Orlando's only flying roller coaster is a standout on the scene. Granted, the attraction is based on an animal that swims, you really do feel like you are soaring through the air while facing the ground. The ride includes four inversions across a very interesting track layout, giving you sensations that you have probably never felt on any other roller coaster. The second half of the ride features the famous wing dip into the water (it's the picture you see anytime the ride is talked about), where water launches from the surface as if your coaster car is gently dipping into the lake surrounding the track. Also don't miss the walk-through aquarium area. Manta is one of the newest coasters on the Orlando scene and is already one of the best.



3 Space Mountain

Magic Kingdom

Sure, there are much newer coasters out there. Ones with better technology, ones that go faster, ones that twist and turn and throw you around, but none of them are your first. What do I mean by that? Any kid who grew up going to Disney World knows, Space Mountain is that roller coaster you set on a pedestal. The large white mountain that you built up as the guts to ride. And when you finally did, you fell in love forever. In reality, Space Mountain doesn't go very fast and it doesn't have many large drops, but it feels like you're shooting the stars and flying through space. It's hard not to feel like a little kid every single time you ride it



2

The Incredible Hulk Coaster

Universal's Islands of Adventure

The roar ... the speed ... the size. The Hulk is, without a doubt, the most intimidating-looking roller coaster in Orlando. The vertical launch inside the Gamma Tube (complete with Bruce Banner screams) into a Zero-G roll, followed immediately by the cobra roll — it doesn't get any better than this opening sequence. I'm grateful for the water mist that hits your face as you dive under the bridge, mainly because it helps me wake up from the minor blackout I just experienced! The rest of the ride is as big of a beast as the character the ride is named after. While it suffers from a weak queue that can leave you with a headache if you are stuck in line too long, The Hulk as a ride by itself stands out as nearly perfect.



Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith

Disney's Hollywood Studios

It's hard to believe this coaster is over 14 years old, but it's still going strong today. What sets this ride apart from the other coasters is the totally immersive experience you get, making this more than just a roller coaster. From your tour of G Force Records and the awesome pre-show to waiting for your super stretch limo in the back ally, it sets you up perfectly for the ride. There aren't many more jaw dropping moments in any park than when you watch the 2.8 second, 0-60 mph takeoff. Throw in three inversions, scenic sets of Los Angeles and multiple songs, and you've got the best coaster in Orlando. Love in a roller coaster!



Skipper Ben is a former Walt Disney World cast member.

He worked at Jungle Cruise, Muppet*Vision 3D and as a producer for Radio Disney. He now resides in Dallas, Texas, with his wife Lisa (also a former cast member) and daughters Abigail Lily and Alayna Iris.

Do you agree with Ben or have a suggestion for a future Top 10?

Let us know at info@attractionsmagazine.com



MORE THAN MEETS

Help protect the AllSpark at Universal Orlando's Transformers: The Ride 3D

By Seth Kubersky

If you are a child of the '80s, "More than meets the eye" likely conjures memories of lying on the living room rug, watching stiffly animated Japanese cartoons while contorting toy cars and trucks into cyber-superheroes. And if you were born around the millennium, that motto means computer-generated mechanical mayhem on screens both big and small. Whichever generation you grew up with, the Transformers brand translates to epic action, honorable heroes and interplanetary peril: all ideal elements for a \$100 million theme park attraction. So it seemed almost inevitable when Universal Studios, working in partnership with director Michael Bay and executive producer Steven Spielberg, brought the blockbuster cinematic "Robots in Disguise" to simulated life. Transformers: The Ride - 3D debuted in 2011 at Universal Studios Singapore and at Universal Studios Hollywood in 2012, instantly becoming the top attractions at their respec-

tive parks. But the transformation these robotic refugees from Cybertron have achieved in Orlando may be the most remarkable of all.

N.E.S.T. RISES

When Universal Studios Florida opened its gates in 1990, the Murder, She Wrote Mystery Theatre was one of the park's original (and among the only reliably operating) opening-day attractions. The walk-through edutainment demonstration about television post-production was renovated into a similar show (Hercules & Xena: Wizards of the Screen) in 1996, then retired entirely in 1999. For over a decade, "Soundstage 44" in the center of the park sat vacant, save for sporadic usage during special events. Then in June of last year, within days of Transformers' Hollywood debut, heavy equipment unexpectedly appeared and quickly demolished the dormant structure. Despite obvious construction, Universal Orlando



A visitor to Universal Studios Florida prepares to meet the menacing Megatron in the flesh (or metal).

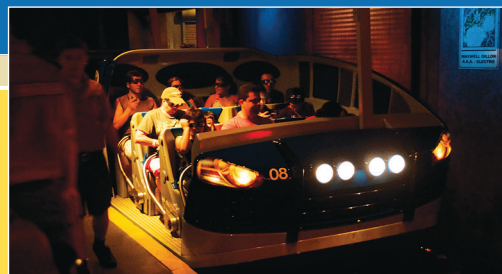
THE EYE!

N.E.S.T. headquarters endures a blistering attack (featuring bursts of flame and actual fighter jets flying in formation) during Transformers' explosive opening ceremony on June 20, 2013.



ATTRACTION SHOWDOWN: TRANSFORMERS VS. SPIDER-MAN

Sharp-eyed visitors will quickly notice some striking similarities between Transformers and its spiritual predecessor, The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man ride next door at Universal's Islands of Adventure. Both attractions utilize identical open-top simulator vehicles (built by Oceaneering Entertainment Systems, who also provided the trackless cars for SeaWorld's new Antarctica) and 4K ultra-hi-def dichroic 3D projections. The rides even share several identical story beats, from a character leaping onto your vehicle in the opening scene, to the freefall finale from a skyscraper into a last-second rescue. But just because these neighboring headliners share design DNA doesn't mean they are identical clones, any more than Disney's animatronic boat rides It's a Small World and Pirates of the Caribbean are interchangeable.



Transformers: The Ride - 3D



The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man

HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS THAT HELP GIVE EACH ATTRACTION ITS OWN UNIQUE IDENTITY:

TRANSFORMERS: THE RIDE - 3D

Sense of Speed: The final scenes of Spider-Man create a dizzying sensation of flying through a cityscape; Transformers takes that intensity and extends it through the entire experience. With its near-constant barrage of breakneck action, Transformers feels "faster" than any other indoor ride in Orlando.

Slow-Mo: On the flip side, two of Transformers' most memorable moments come when the action slows to a crawl for Matrix-like slow-motion sequences. You may mock Michael Bay's cinematic clichés, but his signature Baysplosions are exhilarating to experience up-close.

Photo-Realism: Spidey's simulated city is rendered in an appropriately cartoony style, even after a hi-def upgrade in 2012. Transformers' imagery, on the other hand, is as exactly photo-realistic as anything ILM's Oscar-winning CGI wizards have created for the silver screen. Hint: Look for hidden tributes to the designers in both city's signage.

Media Silos: Most riders will never notice Transformers' most impressive magic trick: a quartet of massive 60' high "media silo" elevators that move vehicles up to the building's second story (during Optimus Prime's introduction) and then back down (during the freefall). Wrap-around 3D projections follow the cars as they travel, making the transitions invisible, and the silos operate in pairs so that one can carry guests while the other resets.

THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF SPIDER-MAN

Sense of Humor: Bay's straight-faced take on the battlin' 'bots is barren of the original cartoon's camp comedic value, but Spider-Man is stocked with the webslinger's signature wise-cracks. Spidey's dialogue has character and wit, while Transformers' is largely limited to "Protect the AllSpark!"

Moving Sets: Though both rides frame their 3D screens with large, detailed physical environments, only Spidey's sets really get in on the act. The swinging fire escape, levitating Statue of Liberty head, and other animated props all add immensely to erasing the edge between reality and illusion.

Fire! Fire!: Transformers features effective fog-fueled simulated explosions, but they can't compare to the real thing. When the Hobgoblin hurls his flaming pumpkin at you, the resulting ball of actual fire always takes your breath away, no matter how many times you've been on the ride.

Stan The Man: As the hit Marvel movies have proved, everything is better with a Stan Lee cameo, and Spider-Man has four (five, counting the audio farewell). You can spot the legendary superhero creator driving a truck, fleeing into a theatre,... and in a couple other secret spots you'll have to find for yourself.

FANS WILL DEBATE FOR YEARS TO COME WHICH OF THESE WELL-MATCHED RIVALS IS SUPERIOR; RIDE THEM BOTH AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF!



declined to confirm the development for months, fueling fan rumors; some (including this author) initially speculated the project would be a year-round haunted house, but the truth turned out to be far more ambitious. Most impressively, the new Transformers attraction opened almost exactly one year to the day from the initial groundbreaking, which Universal Creative's Executive Producer Mike West calls, "the fastest we've ever built an attraction of this scale."

The Transformers may be newcomers to Florida, but

they've been on Universal's radar for "four or five years," according to Universal Creative's President Mark Woodbury. The franchise "has everything you want in an attraction: It has really great interesting characters, ... it has unbelievable action, ... really great environments and a wonderful story." After Transformers was greeted with "wild success" in Singapore and Hollywood, Universal swiftly "fast tracked it to Orlando," exactly duplicating the originals ("Why mess with perfection?" quips West) except for cosmetic alterations to the exterior and queue, and upgraded ultra-hi-definition projectors for its 13 3D screens.

The resulting ride may not exactly blend into the park's Production Central or New York areas, which it sits on the border between, but it certainly makes a strong visual impression. The multistory militarized N.E.S.T. (Nonbiological Extraterrestrial Species Treaty) headquarters – a futuristic bunker bristling with hi-tech conduits and secret codes – now looms

over the south end of Universal Studios' central lagoon. And in case you couldn't guess which adventure awaits inside, a sculpture of Autobot leader Optimus Prime himself stands guard above the entrance. (Tip: Walk a couple of dozen yards towards San Francisco for a great photo-op angle with Optimus in the background.)

PREPARE FOR BATTLE

After reading the requisite warning restricting guests under 40" inches and adults susceptible to strong simulated motions, recruits brave enough to volunteer for N.E.S.T. (the human resistance battling alongside Autobots to defend Earth from the destructive Decepticons) can pick between standby, Universal Express and single rider lines. All three queues are densely themed with futuristic hardware (featuring hidden symbols and switches to touch) and flat-panel video displays, but only the standby line explicates the complete backstory, showcasing sci-fi artifacts like the AllSpark



The AllSpark, source of all Cybertronic life, is showcased inside Transformers' extensive standby queue.



N.E.S.T. soldiers - actually Universal ride operators - stand at attention outside the attraction entrance.

shard (cyberlife-stimulating McGuffin and center of strife in Transformers lore) and Scorponok's severed tail. Video briefings from allies including Ironside, Ratchet and General Morshower (played by Glenn Morshower from "Transformers: Revenge



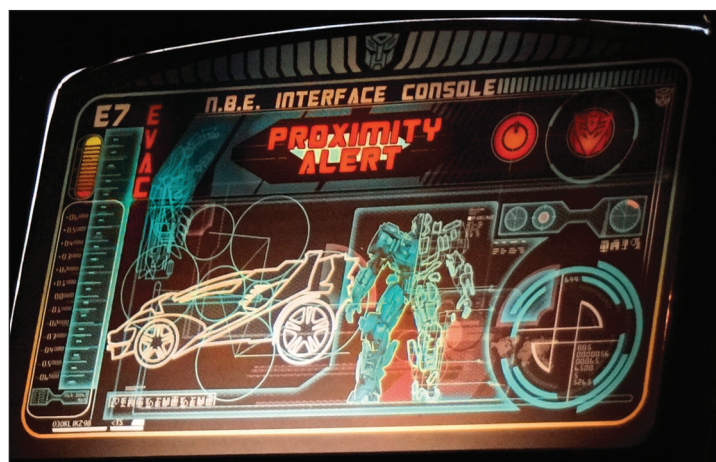
This may look like a long queue, but many guests waited well over two hours to ride Transformers during its debut season.



General Morshower gives guests a video briefing about the Decepticon attack while they wait to board the ride.



This severed tail from Skoponok (as seen in the first film) is just one of the artifacts on display in the ride's standby queue.



Transformer Evac's "console" can be seen in the front row of the ride vehicle.

of the Fallen" and "24") prepare recruits for the coming battle, introducing your compatriots and enemies (see sidebar). Keep an eye on the sector numbers on the walls; by the time you reach the boarding platform in area E7, all heck will be breaking loose, and the bad guys will be inside the formerly secure fortress.

At this point, it's time to grab your 3D "protective eyewear" (dichroic models identical to those used on Star Tours and Despicable Me: Minion Mayhem) and board

"Evac," a blue 12-passenger Autobot escape vehicle, who asks you to "navigate" by keeping an eye out for danger. As Evac swivels into to the first scene, the panther-like Ravage is rampaging through N.E.S.T.'s main hangar, shattering the AllSpark's protective case and landing smack on the hood of your car. Chasing after him, you come face-to-face with your first giant robot smackdown, as your buddy Bumblebee and the sinister Sideways skid in and start slugging it out, seemingly feet in front of you.

During their bout, you end up in possession of the AllSpark and accelerate to evacuate the city, at which point Optimus Prime pulls up to escort you. Megatron gets in the way of your escape, setting off a non-stop chase sequence that doesn't let up until the literally earth-shattering ending. Highlights include surviving a missile "exploding" mere inches from your face; smashing through a skyscraper; and seeing Optimus' awe-inspiring transformation in supersized 3D. Your first time through may be mostly a metallic blur; Transformers packs an overwhelming amount of sensory stimulation into four minutes, and like all top attractions it demands several trips through to fully absorb.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Guests who have already experienced Universal's Islands of Adventure's Spider-Man ride may experience some déjà vu (see sidebar). "We knew from the outset that using the Spider-Man ride system was the way to go," reveals West, but that creat-

ed it's own difficulties: "We had to create a real environment, it wasn't an animated environment.

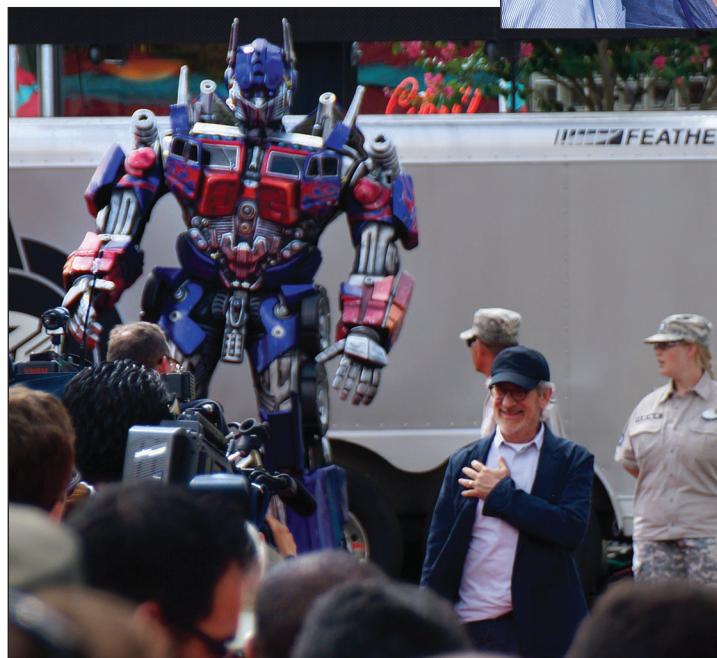
We had to make sure that seamless blend between that high-definition video and the real set had to be there, because we didn't want guests to see when you were leaving the media and going to a set. That was a real challenge, making sure that we could blend great media with just-as-great sets, and also tying in live-action effects."

Those efforts apparently paid off, because as West reports, "guests come off and they go 'Wow! How'd they do that?'" The 'wow' moments Woodbury is most proud of include the "media silos" devised to help guests "appreciate the scale of the really giant characters" and the "classic Michael Bay" slow-motion scenes. "This attraction is groundbreaking on several levels," Woodbury boasts. "Technologically and visually, the sense of immersion that we've been able to accomplish is really unparalleled. But ultimately, according to West, "it's all about the story. You want the guests coming away having a great experience ... you don't want them thinking about the technology."

ROLL OUT

On the grand opening day, June 20, voice actors Frank "Megatron" Welker and Peter "Optimus Prime" Cullen walked the red carpet alongside towering incarnations of their characters (available daily for meet and greets at a bunker across from the

Voice actors Frank "Megatron" Welker, left, and Peter "Optimus Prime" Cullen play enemies on-screen but are old friends off-screen.



Oscar-winning director/producer Steven Spielberg poses alongside Optimus Prime at the ride's grand opening celebration.

Supply Vault gift shop, where you can also get exclusive action figures and edible chocolate AllSparks). Even Oscar-winner Steven Spielberg was in attendance, and impressed enough by the pyrotechnic-packed dedication ceremony – which featured film-used full-sized Optimus and Bumblebee vehicles and fighter jet fly-overs – to film it on his iPhone. The ride itself is inspiring that same sense of awe every day, at an astounding rate of one million riders in just over a month. So whether you are an old-school "G1" fan, an admirer of Bay's films, or just looking for the latest in cutting edge dark-ride thrills, it's time to "Roll out!" to Universal Orlando.



KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AND FOES

Even if you've never seen a single Transformers episode or film before, you can still enjoy the ride as a purely visceral experience, and if you pay attention to the queue videos you'll get the gist of the storyline. But the action will seem a little less like a chaotic blur of chrome if you become familiar with these important Autobot allies and Decepticon antagonists before beginning N.E.S.T. training:

AUTOBOTS (GOOD GUYS)

Optimus Prime: Red and blue leader of the Autobots, disguised as a Peterbilt 379 truck. He stands over three stories tall in robot form; the sword-wielding statue above the attraction entrance is "life-size."

Evac: The last-resort transport that serves as your rookie ride vehicle. Look for his arms in front of your car when he partially transforms to catch the AllSpark.

Bumblebee: Optimus' sidekick doubles as a canary-yellow Camaro, and can only communicate via radio clips. Spot the crushed VW Beetle (a nod to Bumblebee's cartoon incarnation) at the ride's end.

DECEPTIONS (BAD GUYS)

Megatron: Optimus' scarred sworn nemesis, he's intent on using the AllSpark shard (source of all Cybertronic energy) to turn Earth's technology against humankind.

Ravage: The first Decepticon you'll have a close encounter with is this devious cat-like robot, who breaks into N.E.S.T. and runs away with the AllSpark.

Devastator: At over 100 feet long, this "Constructicon" is the biggest 'bot of all; beware his vacuum-like maw, which sucks whole cars into a maze of gnashing gears.

Starscream: Megatron's cowardly lieutenant likes to swoop in, take a few potshots, then flee in fighter-jet form when resistance arrives.

"Imagine, if you will..."

TRIBUTE TO THE TWILIGHT ZONE TOWER OF TERROR

By Michael Corbisiero

Tonight's feature calls for.
a different sort of introduction...

We invite you to join us as we delve into an attraction that has engendered intrigue and fear. Standing at 199 feet, the Hollywood Tower Hotel looms in a corner of Disney's Hollywood Studios, inconspicuous to guests at first glance. Closer inspection may reveal a few peculiar things. The building appears to have been marred. Perhaps by some sort of inclement weather? The bellhops appear aloof and a bit pallid. A thick layer of particles and cobweb adorn the lobby — which appears to have furnishings from another era. And does the placard out front say "Tower of Terror" upon closer inspection? Something is certainly amiss. Step a bit closer and you just might hear the screams of guests plummeting into ...

The Twilight Zone.



PHOTO BY BANKS LEE

A new era began for the Disney company in 1984 when Michael Eisner was made CEO. In the myriad of changes that followed, including a renaissance in Disney's animation division, a phrase was coined as an encapsulation for this period: "The Disney Decade". "Michael quite wisely recognized that one of the driving things of the company's popularity and financial gain rested with its theme parks," former Disney Imagineer and theme park designer Craig McNair Wilson stated. It was upon Eisner's insistence that many attractions and expansions the Imagineers had previously pitched to no avail finally happened.

While The Tower of Terror wasn't explicitly outlined in Eisner's plans to expand the resort, its genesis was a result of one of the items on The Disney

Decade agenda: Disney MGM Studio's Sunset Boulevard. "The impetus for the Tower of Terror was: 'We need to have something at the end of Sunset Boulevard'," revealed McNair. It was meant as something to expand upon the 1930's-1940's era chosen; the apex of the glamor and glitz of Hollywood. MGM itself was formed as a way to appease the populace Universal intended on targeting with Universal Studios.

The germ of the ride was formed with a mock-up of an attraction based on the comedy "Airplane!". McNair recalled their "What if?" project was an airport on the backlot filled with jokes and thrills, including faux security checkpoints and three airplanes that could also be used for filming productions. "Everyone loved it until they realized it was going to be a \$220 million ride," quipped McNair.

Some time later, McNair



The Hollywood Tower Hotel looms over Sunset Boulevard at 199 feet tall. From the moment guests set sight on the building, the ride imparts a story.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DISNEY

was told to amass and a lead a core group of Imagineers, affectionately called "The Knuckleheads," which included Steve and Tim Kirk, Jim Steinmeyer and William Stout. "Get 'The Knuckleheads' together, be in my office by two o'clock. Michael [Eisner] has someone he wants us to meet with," McNair recalled being ordered by Marty Sklar, the former International Ambassador for Walt Disney Imagineering.

In the office stood Eisner with filmmaker and actor Mel Brooks, the auteur responsible for a slew of satires and comedies. Brooks and his family enjoyed Disneyland and the hope was to create a new attraction with his imprint on it. "So

will the ride be funny or will it be scary?", Brooks pondered in the first meeting. This was a question the team had thought about in their preliminary work. The core group of Imagineers sifted through Brooks's backlog of material for

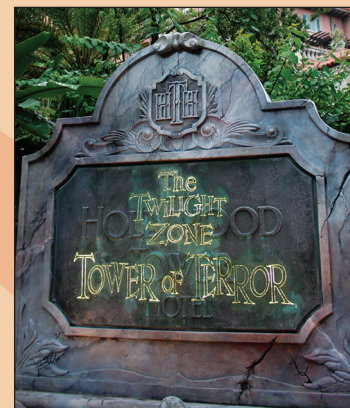


PHOTO BY BANKS LEE

The ghostly changing sign by the attraction's entrance states the hotel opened in 1912. The attraction actually opened to guests on July 22, 1994.

Each "elevator" ride vehicle holds approximately 22 guests. They get a quick view of the park before plummeting down the elevator shaft.



The ride vehicles climb the first elevator shaft and encounter the five unfortunate souls lost in The Twilight Zone. This illusion is accomplished with a Pepper's Ghost effect.



Guests board their elevator in the boiler room, which accurately reflects the era the attraction is set in. Their departure is set into motion by the ride's bellhops, who are specifically given the direction that they're "frozen" in time.

PHOTO BY BANKS LEE

inspiration. It was agreed that no one film would suffice as the primary source for a full-fledged ride, but a tone could be derived from one. "We ultimately decided upon "Young Frankenstein" as our muse, in terms of doing something that was both funny and scary," McNair said. "At the same time [of meeting with Brooks], we were working on a four star

hotel to sit toward the front gate of Disney MGM. I was all about implementing show into the concept." The idea was to have guests pass through areas that would dynamically change. One example involved occasionally transposing an audio-animatronic for a real actor in the hotel to ensure guests couldn't memorize everything the attraction had to offer.

A meshing of the two was suggested and The Hollywood Horror Hotel was born, nicknamed "Hotel Mel" by the Imagineers. A real hotel would have served as an adjunct with the attraction being the centerpiece of the experience. Former Disney Imagineer, artist and concept designer Tim Kirk revealed the Imagineers aspired to also offer effects in the rooms for guests to experience during their stay. "Maybe we were kind of imagining things; to think guests would want to experience that," he commented with amusement.

Several iterations were created, all incorporating thrills and gags. One such moment included guests being on the set of a hotel during Brooks's latest film shoot. Writer and theme park aficionado Jim Hill described one of the original concepts of the freefall experience: "You'd reach the hotel shaft, in which Mel would yell 'Cut!' causing the elevator cable to be 'cut' and send guests plummeting to their death. Except they wouldn't because they'd stop just short enough to make it to the gift shop." This rendition of the ride could be compared to The Haunted Mansion in that it was meant to amuse and frighten.

The Tower of Terror

After many brainstorming sessions and conceptualizations, Brooks took his leave from the project and the world of theme parks. Hill postulated that it might have had something to do with a failed television series helmed by Brooks entitled "The Nut House." Mel would later go on to direct "Robin Hood: Men in Tights". This left the team with the tower concept and no branding.

McNair would later part the project and resign from Disney Imagineering before seeing the tower to its fruition. A fair amount of the attraction's core was established under his guidance, which included the pivotal drop sequence. The initial idea was spurred when he demonstrated what the ride vehicle could do with the use of a salt and pepper shaker; pushing the salt shaker off of the table and letting gravity handle the rest. Not only did the ride vehicle need to move guests vertically, but also horizontally. Skepticism was pushed aside and the Imagineers reached out to Otis Elevator to test this idea.

In conjunction with Otis Elevator, McNair's notion of a freefall mechanism was worked into the attraction. "The dirty secret of the ride is



PHOTO COURTESY OF DISNEY

Utilizing motors that weigh 132,000 pounds, the Tower of Terror accelerates guests at 15 times the speeds of normal elevators. It can reach its top speed of 39 MPH in 1.5 seconds.

that it uses two vehicles," he disclosed. The first moves guests down a hall, through a painstaking recreation of The Twilight Zone theme, in which it enters into a second vehicle, the "tower" portion of the experience. This elevator shaft is equipped with industrial elevator motors supplied by Otis to hurl guests upward and screaming downward faster than gravity could accomplish.

Both McNair and Kirk divulged that The Mission Inn (located in Riverside, Calif.) served as one of the primary inspirations for the Tower of Terror's exterior lined with Spanish Colonial architecture. Portions of the lobby were based on the Millennium Biltmore Hotel (Los Angeles,



The lobby and study feature a collection of antiques, items constructed especially for the ride, and furnishings from the 1940s.



PHOTO BY BANKS LEE

Calif.). The final tower's exterior is ultimately an amalgamation of architectural styles, but firmly vested in the aesthetic of Sunset Boulevard.

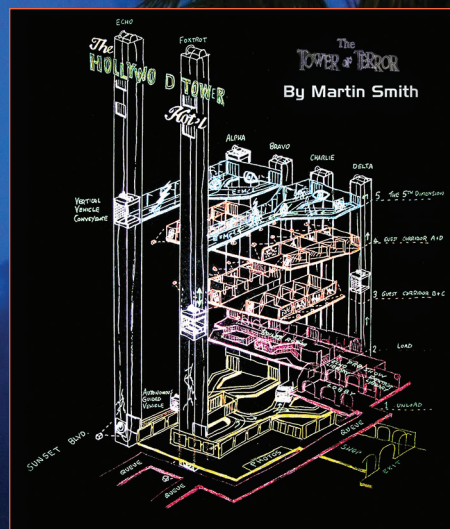
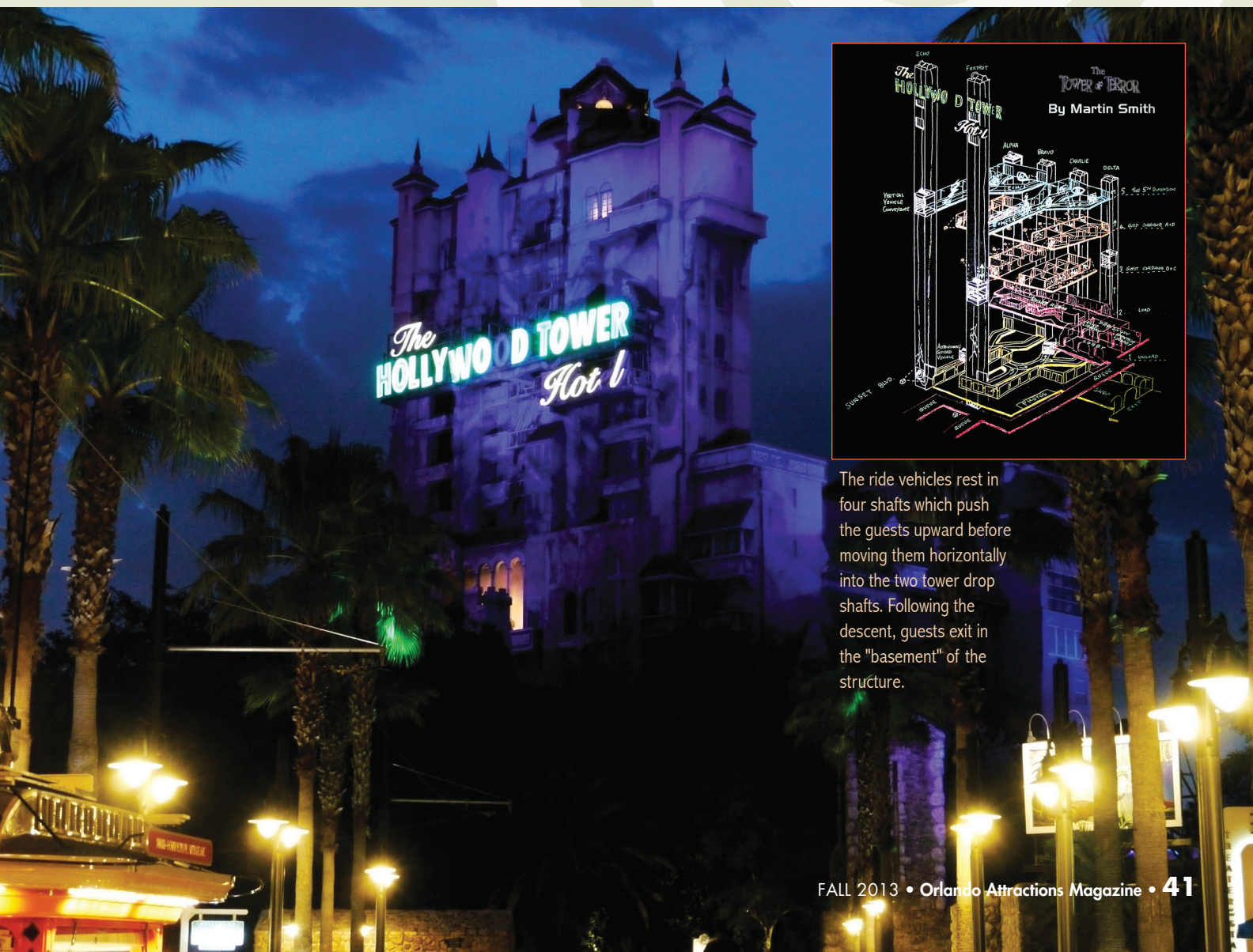
A Fifth Dimension

The Imagineers sought out a property that would coalesce

with their tower-based freefall concept. "We looked into Stephen King's material first, but ultimately "The Twilight Zone" offered us more variety," Kirk recounted. Perhaps in a different world, we might have seen "Stephen King's Tower of Terror." This didn't stop the

Imagineers from placing a subtle nod to horror films inside the attraction. Astute guests might hear a familiar score from Kubrick's horror opus when walking through a portion of the lobby.

"The Twilight Zone" happened to boast a cerebral sense

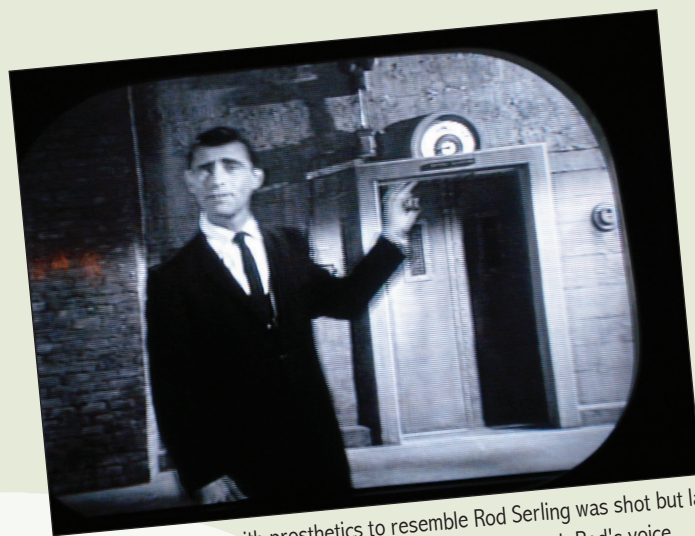


The ride vehicles rest in four shafts which push the guests upward before moving them horizontally into the two tower drop shafts. Following the descent, guests exit in the "basement" of the structure.

of suspension without a reliance on gore. Much like "The Twilight Zone" creator and host Rod Serling found latitude in fantastical settings, the Imagineers could offer a frightening experience without breaking the park's family-friendly image. Disney reached out to the widowed Carol Serling. It was determined that in spite of Rod Serling selling the intellectual rights to CBS after its cancellation, the rights to a theme park attraction were still retained by his estate. A deal was struck and the Imagineers immersed themselves in the show's many stories for inspiration. Michael Sprout, the show writer of the attraction was said to have

screened every Twilight Zone episode in preparation.

The Imagineers had to figure out a way to retrofit the series into their preexisting concept. "One of the most common themes of the series is a sense of discomfort and disorientation," said Marc Zicree, television writer, director and author of "The Twilight Zone Companion". The freefall aspect of the ride served as a suitable nexus for the property. The concept invited guests to experience a "lost" episode of "The Twilight Zone". (It should be noted no episode involving a haunted hotel was produced.) The exterior of the hotel facade was marred to provide



Footage of an actor with prosthetics to resemble Rod Serling was shot but later discarded, although an impersonator was still used to match Rod's voice.



Everything found in the attraction boasts a specific amount of dust and cobwebs and requires the custodial staff to be briefed as to how "dirty" the "hotel" must be kept.

synchronicity to the ride's story; one evening, a portion of the building was struck by lightning, sending five unfortunate souls to The Twilight Zone. Per the narrative sanctioned by Imagineers, the Hollywood Hotel opened in 1917 and abruptly closed on Oct. 31, 1939.

A large casting net was thrown and voice actor Mark Silverman was handpicked by the Imagineers and Carol Serling to impersonate Rod's

emblematic narration. New footage and audio were obtained to blend with old cel-luloid shot during the production of the series for the pre-show. Guests would be strained to find the seams in this presentation that pre-ludes their descent into the boiler room.

No detail was spared on the ride's interior. A laborious amount of research was conducted to capture the technology of the 1930s to 1940s the



Imagineering had to employ their unique skill set to properly make the Hollywood Hotel appear ominous and make it appear it's lofted higher with the use of forced perspective.

structure is enmeshed with. From the switch plates and many furnishings to the many facets of the boiler room, everything was carefully recreated based on what a guest would see in a hotel in the late 1930s to early 1940s. In the ride's lobby rests antique chairs dating back to the Renaissance era, several bronze statues carved by French artist Moreau, a Mahjong set placed in an accurate manner, mailboxes with parcels left in it and many more adornments all fitting within the chosen era.

The proposition of horizontal and vertical moments were implemented by filling a space to the brim with vignettes from *The Twilight Zone's* theme that leads guests through to the elevator shaft that invariably sends them plummeting, although not uniformly. Profiles have been programmed and randomized for each encounter. "The additional profiles were a 'happy accident'," McNair stated.

A slew of references from the television series can be found throughout the ride. Some of these facsimiles include a pair of broken spectacles from "Time Enough at Last", the penny Mystic Seer machine from "Nick of Time", the broken watch from "A Kind of a Stopwatch" that could freeze time, and the red toy telephone from the episode "Long Distance Call".

Other Permutations

"The hope in the 1990s was that the property would be familiar with the public, but even if it wasn't, the atmosphere and experience would still carry it," Kirk affirmed. This kernel has remained true in all renditions of *The Tower of Terror*.

In the versions at Disney parks in California and Paris, the ride's forward elevator

motion was dropped due to logistical concerns, primarily related to the allotted space the buildings permitted and budgetary parings. But they still follow the same narrative penned by Imagineer Michael Sprout with material carried over from the Florida incarnation.

The *Tower of Terror* at Tokyo Disney, however, boasts an entirely original concept that's divested from the property due to the variance in cultures and because the Oriental Land Company would have had to offer requisite fees to both Disney and CBS. The ride system is similar, but the narrative's focal point is on Harrison Hightower, said to be the hotel's famous builder. Guests experience the drop as a result of a curse brought on by an idol Hightower brought from one of his expeditions. Like the California and Paris renditions, the ride circumvents the horizontal hallway of the Florida version. Thematically, there's a large disparity, but its effect is still the same.

Each design team offered their own architectural take with minor changes to the interior to reflect the logistics and budgetary constraints of each project. In a way, this is befitting of the concept and its roots as an anthology series, which encouraged the notion of offering multiple stories and interpretations.

Picture If You Will...

There's been some question of the ride's vitality; some saying it feels dated and the "The Twilight Zone" lacks the clout it once had since its opening on July 22, 1994. When the series first premiered, there was nothing like it; a collection of bizarres stories with no recurring characters, but motifs and themes. Today, there's still arguably little that resembles the television program. "I talk to young people who've just

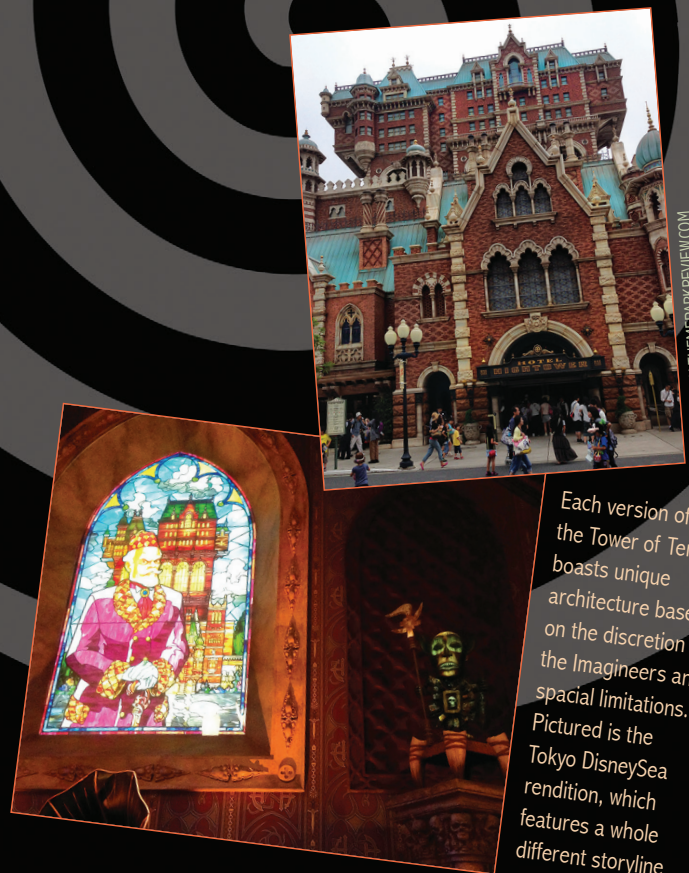
started watching "The Twilight Zone" today and they're every bit engaged as people who grew up with the show," said author Zicree. But none of this would have been possible without the unbridled imagination of Rodman Edward Serling, or "Rod," as he preferred. After a honorable discharge from his Army post as a paratrooper, Serling turned to writing as an outlet. After the pilot, "The Twilight Zone" spawned five seasons, which subsequently delved deeper into the inexplicable and bizarre, all while maintaining some sort of kernel of truth.

Would Rod Serling have approved of *The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror*? Serling was described as a thrill-seeker by Zicree. "For Rod's 40th birthday, he visited his infantry regiment and took one last jump out of the unit. I

believe if he were alive, he would have been the first one in line," he posited.

The *Tower of Terror* is a timeless attraction; it's nestled in an era that it intrepidly embraces. It clearly delineates itself as a fixture from another era. As author and unofficial Disney Historian Jim Korkis put it, "Tower of Terror is without a doubt an E Ticket attraction in every sense of the phrase, from technology to storytelling to attention to detail." Much like the original series, the ride will continue to invoke fear and delight and ultimately inspire. We think Serling wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

So next time you find yourself in the lobby of the Hollywood Hotel, we suggest being very careful, or else you might just find yourself in ... *The Twilight Zone*.



Each version of the Tower of Terror boasts unique architecture based on the discretion of the Imagineers and spacial limitations. Pictured is the Tokyo DisneySea rendition, which features a whole different storyline.

PHOTOS BY BY THEMEPARKREVIEW.COM

MERMAIDS & OLD FLORIDA CHARM

By Barb Nefer



Weeki Wachee State Park is an affordable attraction alternative

Mermaids have always been popular, but over the years they're had spikes in interest from things like Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and the recent Animal Planet "documentary," *Mermaids: The New Evidence*. While the latter was a fictional show presented under the guise of fact, there's a place in Florida where mermaids are, indeed, as real as they get. You can see them perform underwater several times a day, and even meet them on land, at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park.

An Age-Old Fascination

"There's always been an interest in mermaids, and that's why this park has been here for so long," Public Relations Manager John Athanason said of the unique state park. "We didn't invent mermaids here at Weeki Wachee. They've been around for hundreds of years, and there's such a mystique about them. Now the modern media has picked up on that a little bit, and I think it's wonderful. But we've had it here for 66 years, so we like to think we're the mecca of mermaids."

How did Weeki Wachee become the only state park to have mermaids on its payroll? The attraction was the brainchild of former Navy frogman Newt Perry, who developed a way to breathe

underwater through air hoses. He bought the property that's now Weeki Wachee Springs State Park in 1946, built an underwater theater, and hired young women to perform as mermaids.

According to Athanason, that original showplace, which was built right into the limestone six feet under the water's surface, was later replaced with a larger theater. The theater that's here now was built in the late 1950s," he said. "The original sat maybe 22 folks, and this one holds 400."

One-of-a-Kind Theater

That expansion happened when the American Broadcasting



It's not uncommon to spot turtles, eagles, alligators and even manatees on the daily boat tours offered at Weeki Wachee Springs.

Company bought the Weeki Wachee attraction. According to Athanason, "The theater itself and the components were built in Clearwater and trucked over here. Then an assortment of underwater divers and welders sunk it right into the spring. That's why this park is unique. No one can duplicate what we have here because of environmental laws. You'll never again see another structure like this built in a natural spring."

The spring goes straight down 117 feet and is the opening of the Florida aquifer. Athanason said, "Out of that opening comes about 117 million gallons of water daily, and it feeds the Weeki Wachee River. It originates here, feeds our Buccaneer Bay water park, and when you go around the river bend, it's 12 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. It's 99.8 percent pure spring water that stays at 74 degrees constantly, year 'round."

"The biggest misconception is that the mermaids swim in a tank or an aquarium. That's simply not the case. It's very difficult to describe the location until you see it firsthand."

You immediately understand the concept when you take your seat in the theater and realize that you're actually below the water, with the spring itself acting as the "stage." Because it's totally open, you'll see fish, sea turtles, and even the occasional manatee improvising a performance along with the mermaids.



You'll see mermaids in the water and on land, where they're happy to pose for photos.

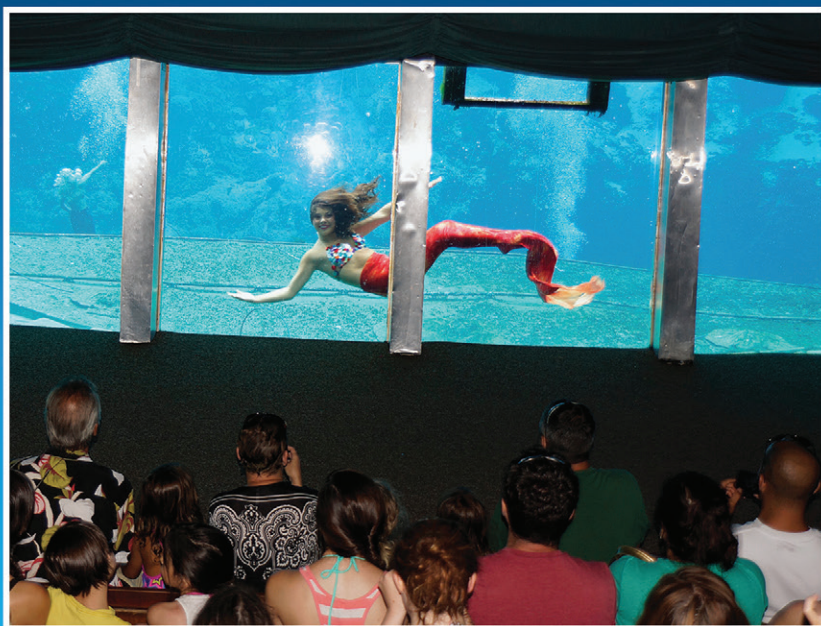
"I think that's part of what helps with the charm and the mystique of this park because you get double the entertainment," Athanason added. "Even though we have an attraction in the mermaid show itself, the natural resources and the ability for our visitors to see the spring via the underwater theater is magnificent in its own right. When you're sitting in this theater, you see part of the real Florida, and then we throw in beautiful mermaids, too."

It's Not Easy Being Finned

According to Athanason, performing as a mermaid is much more difficult than people realize. "These girls make it look easy, but the water temperature is pretty cold. Your body temperature is 98.6, you go into 74 degree water, and after about 40 minutes you lose a degree of body temperature. Hypothermia can set in, and that's why our shows are only so long."

"Then you throw in the current because of the enormous amount of water coming in from the aquifer. There's about a five mile an hour current, so they have to fight it. They're not wearing any weight belts or scuba gear to keep them warm. Their buoyancy is strictly maintained by how much air they take in through the air hose and how much they exhale"

Because of all these factors, it takes three to six months to learn the basics and the choreography for just one show. The mermaids train for over a year to learn every part. Athanason said, "We don't get a lot of turnover because there's a lot of time and effort the girls invest."



The underwater theater provides a window directly into the spring where the mermaids perform.

Struggle to Survive

When Walt Disney World was first built, Weeki Wachee still attracted a lot of visitors, although I-75 siphoned off the travelers who once drove right past the park on Highway 19. "In the '70s, coming to Orlando meant visiting the Magic Kingdom, and then you had really nothing else to do, so you came to Weeki Wachee or Cypress Gardens," Athanason explained.

But over time, Disney expanded to eventually include four theme parks, while Universal added two of its own, and SeaWorld offered yet another option to keep people in the area for their whole vacation. Because of that, Athanason said many of the old roadside attractions went extinct.

Weeki Wachee managed to hang on, buoyed in part by the decision to add a water park. "We built Buccaneer Bay back in the early '80s," Athanason said. "It made us more appealing to the locals. The water park afforded the opportunity to come back week in, week out, and swim in the spring."

The State of Florida to the Rescue

The park still struggled until 2008 when the state of Florida stepped in to make it part of the State Park system. "I think they really recognized the cultural significance of this park and its importance because of the natural spring and surroundings," added Athanason. "It was the best thing that could have happened."

The mermaid shows are still the main attraction, with multiple performances of "Fish Tails" and "Hans Christian Andersen's The Little Mermaid" each day. The former is a performance that weaves



It may look as though the mermaids appear like magic, but they really come in through this entry tube. Then they must swim through a long tunnel to the performance area.

in the park's history and climaxes with an amazing feat of underwater breath-holding. After each show, a mermaid meets guests for photos near the gift shop.

Weeki Wachee Springs also has activities that highlight its identity as a state park. There's an animal show with native wildlife like snakes and alligators and a scenic 30-minute boat ride down the river. Near the entrance there's a separate concession renting canoes and kayaks if you want to take a self-paced scenic journey.

Buccaneer Bay, which is open seasonally, is a big draw, too. Its water slides drop riders right into the chilly springs. There's a diving platform and a real lazy river. Unlike the concrete troughs at traditional water parks, nature's park sends you through a genuine waterway with depths of up to 16 feet. There's also a play area for young children.

A Less Expensive Alternative

Even though it's a two hour drive from Orlando, Weeki Wachee Springs offers a unique alternative to the big attractions. "If you really want that laid-back, less expensive option, this is the perfect place for you," Athanason explained. "The mermaid shows do reach capacity in the summer, but other than that, you're not going to have the hustle and bustle and standing in long lines like you would at the theme parks. At a rate of only \$13 for adults and \$8 for kids, and no parking fee, we're a nice day trip."

Besides lower crowds, you can also count on Weeki Wachee to transport you into the bygone era of original Florida attractions. According to Athanason, "People say, 'It's been 40 years. I remember coming here when I was a little kid.' They come back to renew those memories again, so we really don't want to change our park that much."

The Fountain of Youth

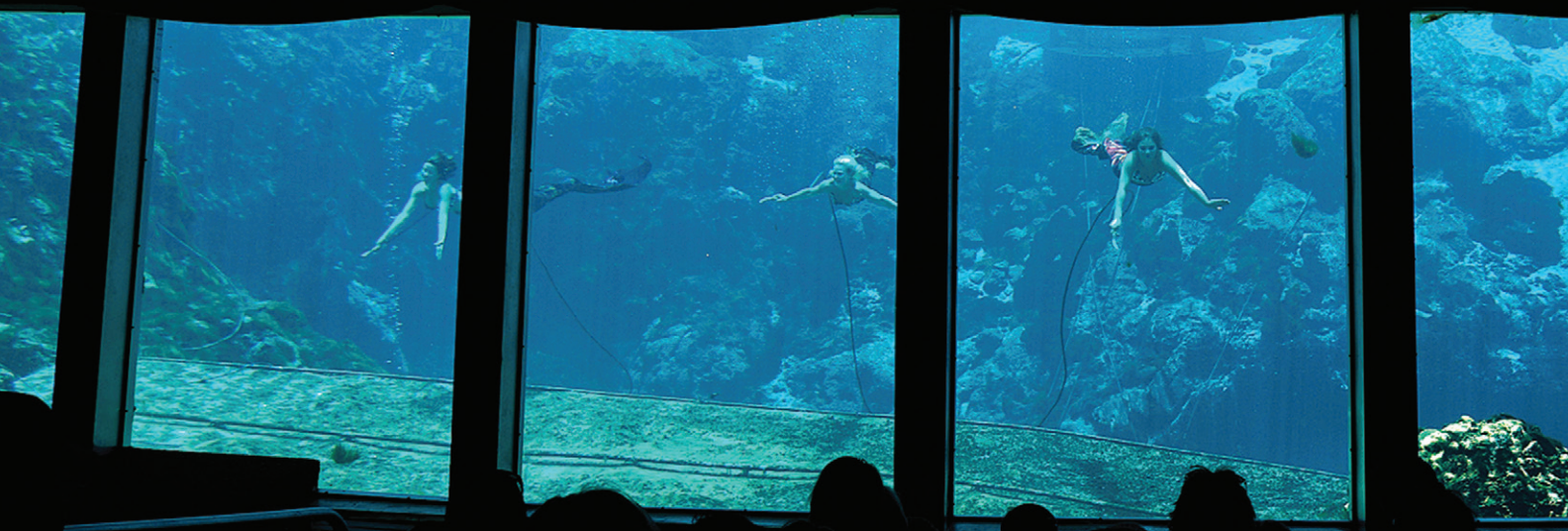
Indeed, you might even see some of the original mermaids doing a performance. Athanason said, "On our 50th anniversary we invited a group of our former mermaids. We asked them to come back and perform a show for that weekend. It was such a huge hit that they come back one weekend a month now. They're remarkable and very inspiring. You've got women who are in their 40s, 50s and 60s. We had one who was in her 70s, but she has since retired ... again.

"When you watch them underwater, it's like they're 18 again. If you ask them, they would swear this was the Fountain of Youth, and their performances prove it."

While Weeki Wachee Springs State Park may not be the legendary place Ponce de Leon was looking for, it does indeed prove that you can freeze the hands of time. The attraction is preserved much as it was in its early days and serves up a true slice of Florida nostalgia.



Buccaneer Bay is a water park with a twist. You splash and slide right into the chilly spring.





ROSEN CENTRE HOTEL OFFERS LUXURY AND CONVENIENCE

The Rosen Centre Hotel is hard to miss. It's right next to the Orange County Convention Center.





Jackie Roseboom

The Rosen Centre Hotel is best known as being a convention hotel because of its close proximity to the Orange County Convention Center, as well as its own impressive convention space. But when you arrive, you'll be surprised at what else the hotel offers.

All of the hotel's features are just steps away from the large open lobby. The bar area features lots of seating: couches, tall tables and comfortable chairs. No matter your requirements, you'll find a comfortable place to chat. The lobby and hallway carpets feature vibrant colors with different patterns but the same color scheme. It adds an interesting design element all around the hotel.

The featured restaurant is Everglades. It's upscale but you don't have to dress up. The atmosphere is casual and relaxed. The food presentation is beautiful and includes combinations



The Rosen Centre's large pool is right outside the lobby and convention area. A new poolside restaurant will be added next year.

Resort Report



98Forty is one of two small bars where you can get food and drinks right in the lobby.



Everglades' decor makes South Floridians feel right at home.



The Lobby Bar has a large seating area. The bar itself will be remodeled next year.



The rooms at the Rosen Centre are very spacious and offer most everything you'll need.

that may sound strange, but are truly delicious. For example, the Tenderloin of Buffalo with blueberry sauce was amazing. They also have Alligator Bay Chowder. The surf and turf and some other items are a little pricy, but worth the splurge. Chef Fred Vlachos loves pairing great foods with great wines. So much so that the hotel hosts an event called Vine and Dine multiple times per year.

98Forty Tapas & Tequila is right in the lobby and is a great place to enjoy a mouthwatering Ceviche and a tequila cocktail. Next to that is Banshoo Sushi Bar. The casual Café Gauguin offers something for everyone including a breakfast buffet as well as a full menu. It's open for all three meals. Smoooth Java Coffee Bar (next to the Enterprise rental car desk) serves Starbucks and other grab and go items. The Lobby Lounge & Pool Bar is a popular place day and night. Red's Deli has a New York style and serves soups, salads, pizza and sandwiches. It also doubles as a convenience store.

If you would like to eat at Everglades, but are not staying at the hotel, they will validate your parking. That goes for the spa as well. Reservations are recommended. All the Rosen hotels are known for holiday decorations and activities. Their holiday feasts are popular with hotel guests and locals.

The Spa at the Rosen Centre's contrasting color scheme of cream walls with dark cabinets are accented by beautiful aqua-colored artwork, which helps you ease into stress-free mode. The relaxation room features soothing scenic videos accompanied by calming music. The women's and men's locker rooms include showers, a steam room, restrooms and a small countertop full of amenities to help you get ready.

The spa also has a full salon. But take note, the salon services do not include use of the spa facilities. The exercise room is open 24-hours and is loaded with all the latest fitness equipment, but there is a \$15 dollar charge for the extent of your stay.

Of course there's the stan-

Rosen Centre Hotel

Location: 9840 International Drive, Orlando

Prices: \$99 - \$239

Phone: 800-204-7234

Online: rosencentre.com



The surf and turf at Everglades is worth the splurge.

dard tropical pool with umbrellas, lounge chairs, two hot tubs and a fun little kiddie pool with a fountain.

There are different guest room configurations to suit your specific needs. The standard rooms are spacious and have all the usual amenities, including cribs (complimentary), extra towels and bedding, makeup and shaving mirror, hair dryer, iron and ironing board, refrigerator and a coffee maker.

The executive suites and the VIP suites are available with one or two bedrooms and feature a formal entry way, living room and a wet bar with a refrigerator and microwave. They also have an extra bathroom and access to a VIP lounge. The largest rooms are the two presidential suites that feature a formal entry foyer, a home theater and a main living area with a large conference table.

The best feature of this hotel is its convenient location. It's literally right next to the convention center on International Drive. You don't even need to go outside to get

to the convention center if you use the covered bridge. Numerous restaurants are right on the other side of the hotel and the Pointe Orlando shopping center, which features many great restaurants, a few shops and a movie theater, is only about a 15-20 minute walk. Most of that walk is indoors if you pass through the convention center.

The hotel offers one daily free ride to and from SeaWorld and Universal. If that doesn't fit your schedule, there are other options – for a fee. (The I-Drive Trolley is the best bet for going to SeaWorld, Wet n' Wild and all of International Drive.) Transportation to Disney World is also available roundtrip for \$17 per person.

All rooms and common areas of the hotel offer free wireless internet access. The hotel is pet friendly with a number of rooms set aside for those traveling with dogs. There is a \$20 per day charge for valet parking and \$13 per day for self parking.

If you're looking for a real-



Everglades offers a great bread selection. Notice the alligator-shaped butter.

ly nice hotel in a central location to all the attractions, give the Rosen Centre Hotel a try. Equally impressive, but with a

few less amenities, is their sister hotel, Rosen Plaza Hotel, on the other side of the convention center.

Table Service





Funny Name, Huge Portions

Hash House A Go Go Opens its First Florida Location on I-Drive

Some say the location is cursed. Some say it's built on an ancient Indian burial ground. But Hash House A Go Go, situated just south of Festival Bay Mall on International Drive, is out to prove the right dining concept has arrived. And if our visit is anything to go by, we think they're right.

Hash House began 13 years ago in San Diego, Calif., and while it's a chain restaurant with locations in four states – now five, with the opening of the Orlando location – it has the feel of being family-owned, in part due to a menu filled with comfort foods, in part due to its casual elegance, without a hint of cookie-cutter decor.

When the Travel Chanel's Man v. Food program took on Hash House's Fried Chicken Eggs Benedict – a gluttonous combination of grilled mashed potatoes, tomato, spinach, fried chicken, scrambled eggs, a fresh biscuit, smoked bacon, and grilled cheese, smothered in chipotle cream – the crowd went wild and Hash House achieved instant fame.

Assistant Kitchen Manager



Sous Chef Cory Hoekstra and Assistant Kitchen Manager Mike Koster pose next to the tractor in the lobby.

and Sous Chef Cory Hoekstra introduced us to the concept and the food. Cory is an Orlando restaurant veteran, joining the Hash House team this past June after training at the Las Vegas location. "There is a difference in the tourist flow," he told us. "In Vegas, tourism is constant. Orlando has seasons, with distinct ups and downs, and that has to be handled properly so we always keep the guests happy." The restaurant was quiet during our visit, but at dinner time and weekend brunch the place is packed.

We were intrigued by the restaurant's catch-phrase, Twisted Farm Food. "You have to see the food to grasp the concept," Cory said, "but it's our twist on comfort foods. We don't claim to be farm-to-table, but we're pretty close. Everything is made from scratch, and it's all good, homey food. There are no heat lamps and no microwaves here."

Cory started our culinary tour with the Fried Green Tomato Stack, a towering ensemble of thick tomato slices deep-fried in a sage and corn-flake coating, topped with



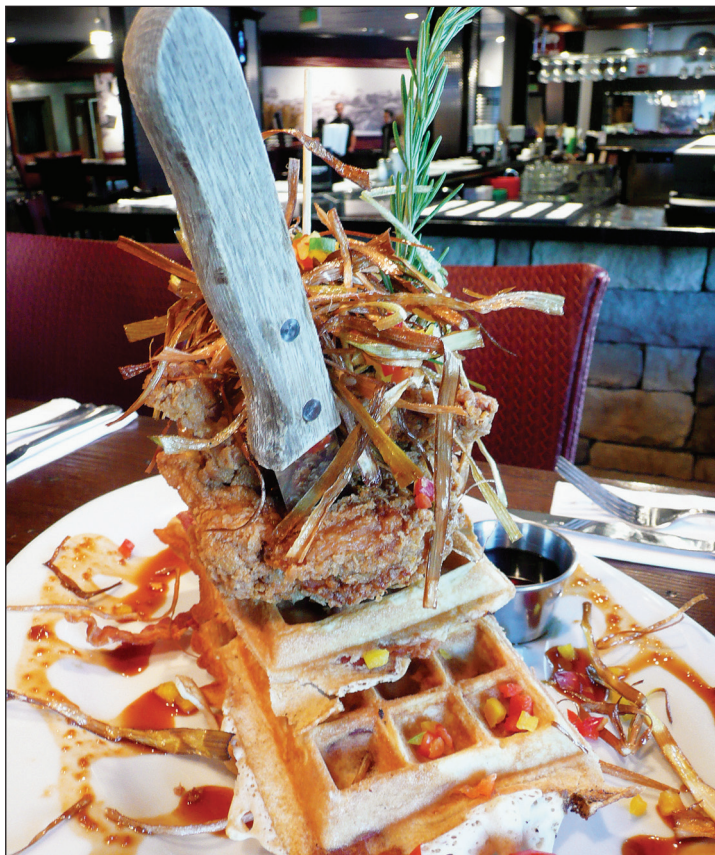
chicken salad and goat cheese, with a rich balsamic reduction, mounted on a massive slice of watermelon. "Eighty percent of our dishes use watermelon," Cory told us. "We figure that way you're getting some fruit every day."

"My idea is that breakfast can be anything, anytime," he continued, "and our Chicken and Waffles is a staple. Did you know that combo originated in the Middle Ages in Europe? I don't even know how they could make waffles back then!" He ducked into the kitchen and returned with three bacon waffles topped with two massive chicken wings and deep-fried leeks, with a drizzle of barbeque sauce and a side of maple syrup. One bite of the chicken and we were transported back

to the days when no-one worried about calories or fat content. It was absolutely succulent, and when paired with a bacon waffle and a quick dip in the syrup, we were in breakfast heaven.

Next we sampled the Corned Beef Hash, cooked for eight hours, then shredded. No diced stuff from a can here. The corned beef was moist and flavorful, its accompanying biscuit featured those wonderful stretch-marks you're supposed to see when they're made right. "It's hard to bake in the humidity we have here in Florida," Cory admitted. "About one month out of the year I can make biscuits perfectly."

Then came the Apple Smoked Bacon and Mashed Potato Stuffed Burger. "Sticking with the diner idea,



One of Hash House's most popular dishes is the Chicken and Waffles.



we take two eight-ounce patties and put toppings in between them. It's a great burger on a Sunday morning after a long Saturday night." In fact, it tasted like the best meatloaf your mother ever made, but on a bun, with a side of batter fries.

Who came up with these brilliant dishes? "Our original executive chef, Andy Beardsley, is super creative," Cory said. "He's originally from Indiana, so he took Indiana comfort food and blended it with Southern California style. We also offer some specials here in Orlando that are specific to the area, like shrimp and grits in a cast iron skillet. It's done in Hash House style, but it's southern comfort food."

Surely after a typical Hash House entrée no one has room for dessert, right? Cory set us straight on that: "You wouldn't believe how much dessert we sell. We make new cheesecake every day, and we like to get creative with it. We just made a Captain Crunch and Peanut Butter Cheesecake, which was

incredible, and we've done things like Snicker's cheesecake and chocolate-dipped banana cheesecake."

Manager Michael Koster dropped by our table, his infectious smile a real asset to the welcoming feel of the restaurant. "The best part of my job is when I get to deliver food," he said. "I talk to the guests, and some of them have been here 10, 12 times, but they still get the same look on their face when the food comes out. Sometimes they bring new people with them and I say, 'Did you warn them?' Everyone takes pictures of their meals."

So enormous are the portions that it looked like mice had nibbled the sides of each dish after we were done, but guests can take comfort in knowing they can split their entrees or take some home to avoid doing what the staff calls "The Zombie Walk" on their way out. There are downsized menus for seniors, and choices like the Grilled Rosemary Chicken and Brie



sandwich or the Grilled Portobello Mushroom Sandwich for those who are watching their waistlines.

Co-owner Jim Rees told us the secret of Hash House's success: "What sets us apart from most restaurants is that dining at Hash House a Go Go is a total dining and entertainment experience. You are

guaranteed to meet new friends, experiment with new flavor combinations and profiles that you have not before experienced while enjoying generous portions of familiar comfort foods presented with style and a flair for the unusual. We certainly hope the success of our first restaurant in Orlando will be good reason to expand the concept in Florida."

But what about the restaurant's quirky name? Jim shed some light on that too, saying, "'Hash house' is a traditional name for a 'breakfast joint' and 'Go Go' is the food – generous portions of comfort food with unique presentations and featuring over the top flavor profiles."

You're going to eat too much, there's no doubt about that, but Hash House A Go Go's insistence that they "don't care how much you eat, we just want to feed you" and the artistic way in which they achieve that, hasn't just broken the curse, it's shattered it.



Just to make sure you get your allowance of fruits, Hash House includes a watermelon slice in many of their dishes and drinks. Here's the Watermelon Kiwi Lemonade.



Hash House A Go Go

Location: 5350 International Drive, Orlando

Price Range: Appetizers: \$9 to \$14
Breakfast: \$7 to \$15
Lunch: \$6.50 to \$15
Dinner: \$15 to \$30
Kid's Meals: \$3 to \$7
Senior's Menu: \$5.25 to \$12.95
Desserts: \$8.95

Contact: 407-370-4646

Online: hashhouseagogo.com

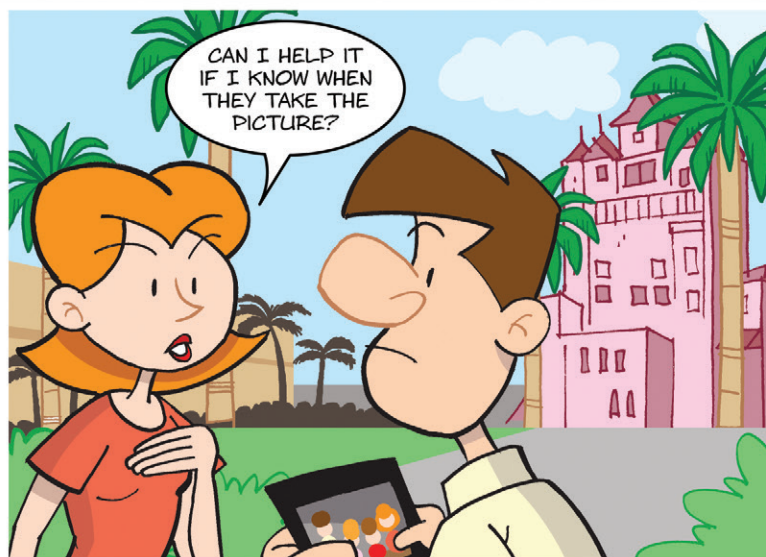
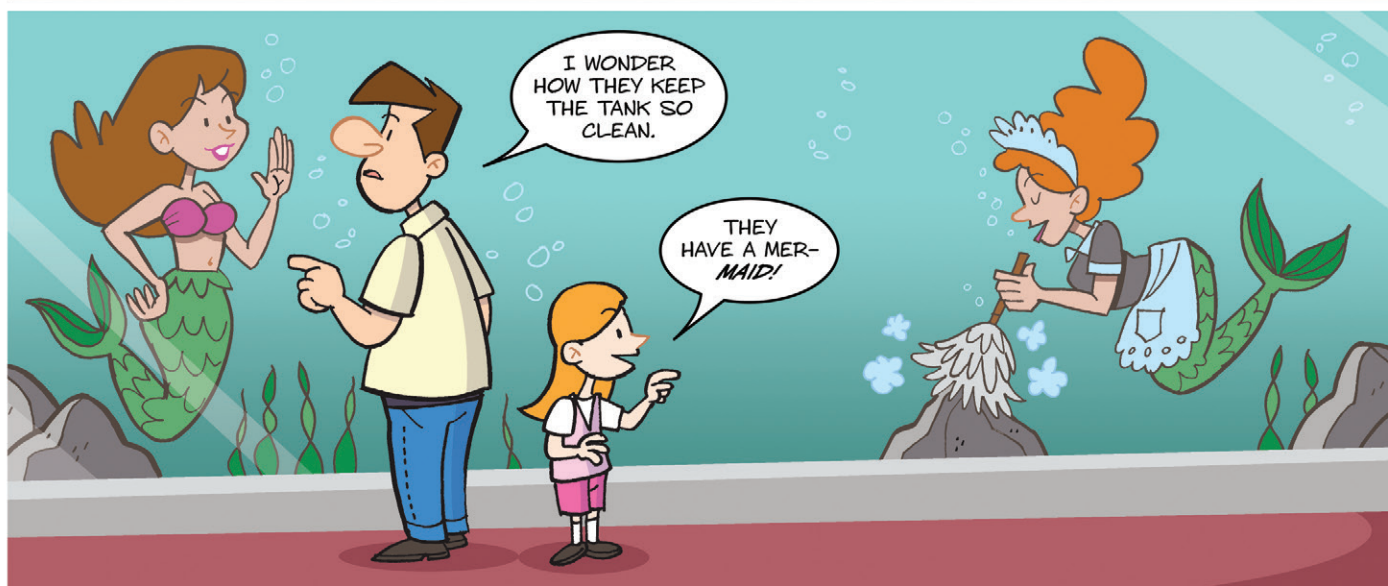
Hours: Sunday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Friday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.



You'll need a huge appetite to finish this Hardwood Smoked Bacon and Mashed Potato Stuffed Burger.

BEAMUSEMENT PARK

by John Green
& Pat Lewis



SPOT the DIFFERENCE

The Pink Berets from the movie "Hop" pose with guests at Universal Studios as the Easter Bunny dances on the parade float with chicks Carlos and Phil.

Can you find 10 differences in the bottom photo?



1. The purple lollipops (top off-center) have vanished.
2. The carrot badge on the foremost bunny's beret is larger.
3. The girl's hat (front-center between the bunnies) is now red.
4. The man wearing a red shirt (left-bottom) now has two red fanny packs.
5. The Lemon Slush & Fruit sign has turned upside down.
6. The girl with the pink hair (center behind bunnies) is gone.
7. The green gummy bear (behind the dancing bunny on parade float) has changed color to blue.
8. The woman wearing a blue shirt (bottom off-center) has a new red purse.
9. The peppermint on the base of the float is missing a red stripe.
10. The gold wheel of the float (left) has an additional grommet on the top section of the wheel.



The Rumor Queue: Lord of the Rings, King Kong, Star Wars and More

Greetings, Theme Park Fans! Welcome to the debut of "The Rumor Queue", a column dedicated to fielding all of the rumors permeating throughout the industry into one convenient place.

Disclaimer: The thoughts expressed here are not purported as fact and should be seen as rumors only until officially confirmed or denied by the companies mentioned.

Tolkien's Middle-Earth

During the winter of 2013, The Saul Zanetz Company filed a trademark for Middle-Earth for use in theme park services, recreation facilities and amusement parks. This is the same company that handles the trademarks for "The Lord of The Rings" and "The Hobbit".

The trademark is all-encompassing and isn't indicative of an impending announcement, but certainly suggests the idea is being toyed with.

Universal's Islands of Adventure Toon Lagoon hasn't received much attention as of late, including its theater, which is often empty. Rumors suggest this space may be demolished and replaced with a recreation of The Shire and accompanying locales from Middle-Earth.

This is all blue sky at this point, as we've

also heard tell of Willy Wonka being scouted for use in the resort.

The Expansion of Isla Nublar

A fourth Jurassic Park film is being prepped for a 2015 release and is said to relaunch the franchise. We've heard murmurings of a new rollercoaster being built to coincide with new film.

Two takes have been rumored: the first being a coaster strewn between vegetation and animatronic dinosaurs and the second involving an excavation site in a mine with a track that dips, treks through darkness and propels guests backwards.

Star Wars and Cars Land

Disney's acquisition of LucasFilm might have left its theme park inclusion uncertain, but there's no doubt this seminal piece of pop culture will find its way into the parks.

We've heard a Mos Eisley Cantina and Jedi Academy are just two of the many things being conceptualized. Rumors suggest this expansion will branch outward from Star Tours at Disney's Hollywood Studios. Displays from the D23 Expo affirm that we're on the cusp of a formal announcement, but still years away from opening.

Cars Land has garnered a lot of traction in California, which if placed in the seemingly desolate Backlot Tour area at Hollywood Studios, would leave space for another Pixar ride. Perhaps the Imagineers have reconsidered an indoor Monster's, Inc. family coaster? Or maybe there is a new concept in the works.

The King's Return?

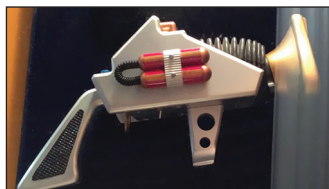
Kongfrontation was removed in 2002 and replaced with The Revenge of the Mummy, but a recent rumor curiously suggests the behemoth with banana breath will return.

Inspired by Hollywood's re-imagining, this idea would be expanded upon and placed where Disaster presently stands at Universal Studios, but admittedly is just a potential concept. Things could change many times before anything is finalized. This is just the nature of the industry.

If you wish to submit a rumor, offer feedback or submit an inquiry, please do so by sending an e-mail to rumors@attractionsmagazine.com. You may request to remain anonymous.

MYSTERY PHOTO

The deadline for entries is Nov. 22, 2013. One answer allowed per person, per issue. Please include your name and mailing address with your answer. Everyone who submits the correct location will go into a drawing. One person, randomly selected from all the correct entries, will win a prize. We reserve the right to publish the name, city and state of those entering. One winner per household allowed per year.



LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTO ANSWER

No one correctly guessed last issue's Mystery Photo location. It is a prop from the "Richie Rich" movie on display at the Planet Hollywood store at Disney's Hollywood Studios.



WIN A PRIZE!

Tell us the exact location of this photo and you could win a prize! To enter, e-mail your answer, along with your name and mailing address, to mystery@attractionsmagazine.com.

Hint: You've walked right past this guy and his friends many times while visiting Walt Disney World.

Also available on your iPad.



And in your pocket.

Now on Nook, including Android devices via the Nook App.



Available on the iPhone
App Store

nook
by Barnes & Noble





Attractions News from Outside the Orlando Area



Kings Island Announces Banshee Coaster

Mason, Ohio — The ill-fated Son of Beast once-looping wooden coaster took its final riders in early 2009. There it sat unmaintained and in disrepair until 2012 when it was mercifully disassembled. After much speculation, Kings Island announced that Banshee would be built upon the site where Son of Beast once stood. At park closing time on Aug. 8, fans and local media were on hand when the record-breaking B&M designed inverted coaster was announced. With inverted coasters, the track is on top and the ride vehicle is suspended below. It will become the world's longest inverted coaster at 4,124.1 feet. It is expected to travel 68 mph to a height of 167 feet and a maximum elevation change of 208 feet. It will invert seven times in a variety of ways, and carry a robust 1,650 passengers per hour on three trains. Construction has already begun. The ride is expected to open in April 2014.

Conneaut Lake Park Suffers Ups and Downs

Conneaut Lake, Penn. — Restoration continues at the 121-year-old Conneaut Lake Park. A Travel Channel film crew was at the park recently to document the efforts that have extended beyond the classic Blue Streak roller coaster into the park mid-

way and other attractions. The Blue Streak roller coaster celebrates its 75th birthday this year. In recent years, the Blue Streak restoration has gained momentum having received a \$50,000 Pepsi "Refresh" grant. It was not too long ago that the coaster was not running. Despite all of the renewal, tragedy has struck the park again. Early the morning of Aug. 1, fire ravaged the 77-year-old Beach Club Restaurant and connected dockside banquet hall. While all park rides were spared, a Blue Streak train being stored within the Beach Club was lost. Both buildings are a total loss and the official cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Life-sized Lego Star Wars X-wing Fighter Comes to Legoland

Carlsbad, Calif. — The world's largest Lego model, a life-sized Star Wars X-wing Fighter, made its way via six freight trucks from New York to Legoland California. The fighter's appearance coincided with Star Wars days at the park in June, but it will remain through the year. The model required 5,335,200 Lego blocks. It weighs 45,980 pounds and sits 11 feet high and extends

43 feet long with a wingspan of 44 feet. It took 32 builders 17,336 hours in the Lego Model Shop in Kladno, Czech Republic to build and is a one-to-one replica of the X-wing in Lego set #9493. However, it is 42x bigger!



Record Breaking Looper Opens at Six Flags

Valencia, Calif. — In June, the world's tallest and fastest looping coaster, Full Throttle, opened at Six



Flags Magic Mountain. Full throttle has several unique features in addition to its sheer speed and height. It is a triple launch coaster with two 0-70 mph forward launches and one backwards launch through a tunnel. Another unique feature is the launch over the "top hat" in which riders are shot up and over the record-breaking loop at a height of over 160 feet, experiencing a spectacular view and some airtime. With Full Throttle's opening, the total coaster count at Magic Mountain was brought to 18, the most in the world.

attractions. The new park is being described as "bigger, better, and wetter". It will cover four additional acres than its previous footprint and will contain more rides than ever, including a new roller coaster. It will be "wetter" as they will double the size of the water park, Hurricane Bay. The group that finally was able to come to an agreement to reopen the park is led by none other than Ed Hart, who was part of the original group running the park before Premier Parks/Six Flags took over in the late '90s until its close in 2009. The park has a planned reopen date of May 2014.



WhiteWater to Provide Water Attractions for Park in World's Largest Building

Chengdu, China — In the center of the all-new 18.3 million-square-foot New Century Global Centre in China sits Paradise Island Waterpark. WhiteWater Company of Richmond, Canada will be providing all of the wet thrills. The park will feature a massive beach with a giant LED screen that will show changing ocean views. Among the water features will be a themed water play structure and a family raft ride. It will contain a multitude of water slides including the looping "AquaLoop". The never-ending wave for boogie boarding called the FlowRider will also be installed.

Kentucky Kingdom to Reopen

Louisville, Ky. — Reports of Kentucky Kingdom's reopening have graced this space on several occasions only to be proven wrong after deals were broken or fell apart. This time, announcements actually appear to be true as work has begun to restore standing

Disney California Adventure to Present World of Color – Winter Dreams

Anaheim, Calif. — As the curtain fell on another D23 Expo in August, preparations were already

Out of the Loop Twitter Feed



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underway for the immensely popular holiday season at Disneyland. Halloween will once again include west coast specific attractions like the transformations to Space Mountain Ghost Galaxy and Haunted Mansion Holiday featuring Jack Skellington. In Frontierland, a Dia de los Muertos celebration will take place. Looking forward to winter, Disney has announced a holiday version of its acclaimed World of Color nighttime fountain and projection show. World of Color – Winter Dreams will be hosted by Olaf the snowman from Disney's upcoming film "Frozen". It will include new scenes from Disney classics "Bambi", "Fantasia" and "Toy Story". Steve Davison, creative director of World of Color said, "I am so excited to be bringing new magic to 'World of Color' this holiday season. The brand-new show is filled with great music, new effects and, of course, all the magnificence of the 'World of Color' fountain and projection system. It's going to be a very powerful and amazing experience for guests of all ages."





Universal's Islands of Adventure



It's not one of Orlando's top 10 roller coasters for nothing. As you walk under The Incredible Hulk Coaster you'll notice a net full of random objects. These are things that have flown off guests as they were shot out of the launch and spun upside-down. Some things, like these sunglasses, aren't so lucky to land in a net. As you can see in the inset photo, many other objects haven't been lucky either. Let these serve as a warning, use the provided lockers and strap on your sunglasses.



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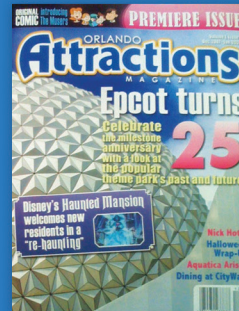
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